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Play Plots—A Dramatic Critic's Diagnosis

BY JOHN MASON BROWN

ON the fifth day of each November bonfires are lighted in London in honor of the discovery of a plot. And Beefeaters, with their lanterns raised, search the basement of the Houses of Parliament as if they still expected to find Guy Fawkes hiding there, with a slow burning match in his hand, ready to set off the powder kegs which would elevate King James I even higher above his subjects.

The story of Guy Fawkes is known to everyone. But between our vague knowledge of his share in this conspiracy and the detailed plan which he and his associates had evolved for carrying it out lies the reason for history's having named the events with which he is connected, not the Gunpowder Story, but the Gunpowder Plot.

Even in the theatre the same distinction can be made. For, strictly speaking, the plotting of a play is not the story upon which that play is founded, or the story that it tells, but the manner in which a particular dramatist, due usually to his times no less than to his personality, has chosen to advance it. It is not those things that happen in a play, but the when, why, and how of their happening.

It is the dramatist's plan of action, his blueprint of events, his mechanical distribution of his fable into acts and scenes. It is the bony structure underlying whatever flesh and blood his characters may boast; the skeleton which makes his play organic and dictates its movements. It is the dramatist's scheme not only for putting his people to the test of deeds or crises, but also for arranging, introducing, illustrating, emphasizing, developing, and concluding the basic idea or situation around which he has built his play.

According to Georges Polti, in one of the dullest and most useless tracts ever published, Gozzi was right when he contended there are thirty-six, and only thirty-six, dramatic situations which a playwright can employ. But as Polti has catalogued these situations, with many subdivisions, under such headings as "Supplication," "Deliverance," "Crime Pursued by Vengeance," "Murderous Adultery," "Involuntary Crimes of Love," and "Obstacles to Love," the world's most stirring dramas lose their identity and dwindle into outlines which sound about as engrossing as do the "Begat and Begot" chapters and the Bronx telephone book, or as would a list of the Saxon dead at the battle of Hastings.

JOHN MASON BROWN

What interests us as playgoers are not basic similarities which must unite certain plots but the vast differences in treatment by means of which old situations can become so new that we are inclined to believe they have never been used before.

That, by Sidney Howard's own admission, "They Knew What They Wanted" was "shamelessly, consciously, even proudly derived from the legend of Tristram and Yseult," has no more to do with its quite independent merits as a play of passion involving California's wine-growers than has the fact that Shakespeare went through his source materials like a shoplifter at Macy's before furnishing his own dramas, or that Maxwell Anderson obviously had the Sacco-Vanzetti case in mind when in an indignant mood he wrote "Gods of the Lightning" with Harold Hickerson in prose, even as he did when, seven years later and in an entirely different mood, he came to write "Winterset" alone and in verse. As playgoers we cannot but agree with Mr. Howard that the "age and service stripes of a story" have very little to do with its "eligibility for present purposes," that "no story is older than its applicability to life," and that none is "younger than the motives of its characters."

Attempting to determine the exact number of dramatic situations which may, or may not, be available to playwrights has no more to do with their treatment of them or with anything else for that matter, than the number of notes on the keyboard of a standard piano has to do with the way in which each composer manages to combine them, or the fact that Edna St. Vincent Millay, Damon Runyon, Diderot, Bacon, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Karl and Graucho Marx have all been compelled to use words derived from an alphabet consisting of twenty-six letters.

"A good plot," said Galsworthy, enunciating his own credo quite solemnly at the outset of his dramatic career, and yet coming closer than have most to a statement of those attributes which are common to the majority of the world's plays that have asked to be taken seriously,

> a good plot is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstances on temperament, and temperament on circumstances, within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea. A hu-

Next Week

"THREE BAGS FULL"
By ROGER BURLINGAME
Reviewed by Walter D. Edmonds

"VOLTAIRE"
By ALFRED NOYES
Reviewed by Ernest Boyd

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> man being is the best plot there is. . . . He is organic. And so it must be with a good play. Reason alone produces no good plots; they come by original sin, sure conception, and instinctive after-power of selecting what benefits the germ. A bad plot, on the other hand, is simply a row of stakes with a character impaled on each—characters who would have liked to live but came to untimely grief.

Such a sober definition of a good plot devised so especially as it was for "well-made" plays that are no less sober, must of necessity more closely approach the truth it aims to establish by the exceptions which it raises than by the cases which it covers. Just as it is easier to enumerate the professional traits of a gangster or a prostitute than it is to describe the characteristics which should distinguish a gentleman or a good woman, so it is easier to define the qualities which make a bad play than it is to name those which constitute a good one.

As theatregoers we cannot quarrel with Galsworthy's description of a poor plot. All of us have suffered far too many times in the presence of dramas in which characters, who cried for life, have been impaled on the row of stakes represented by the plot, to question the accuracy of his statement. We do not even challenge the fundamental validity of his definition of the elements which combine to make a good plot—so long as that plot is serious. We may smile at the stipulated slowness with which the reciprocal interplay of circumstance and character must take place, and quickly recall a hundred pleasant evenings spent in the theatre of sheer entertainment in which no human beings have been remotely involved, and in which the writing has been as inorganic as is some of Shakespeare's or Aristophanes's. But in this frankly spangled world of forgetfulness into which the theatre invites us constantly, no less than in the austere world of which Galsworthy was thinking, we cannot deny that the maddest of plays have found temperament and circumstance interlocked, or that they have usually benefitted from the enclosing atmosphere of an idea, even when that idea has limited itself to being one safely within the comprehension of the Brothers Minsky.

Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that a good plot is an edifice built by a dramatist to house his story or his idea, and put by him at the disposal of his characters so that they may live therein with comfort and to advantage. By the kind of edifice he erects, as well as in the way in which he furnishes it, he betrays his personality, his taste, and his pretensions, exactly as we do in the architectural and decorative selections displayed in our homes. What the construction and furnishings of his plot also make clear, as the construction and furnishings of our homes have a cruel way of doing, is his wealth, only in his case they make public that truly important form of wealth, the wealth of his dramatic imagination.

If the story of a play were all that interested us in that play, any review which told that story for us would be as interesting to us as the play itself. But in playwriting, as in all the story-telling arts, what counts is not the story being told, but that personal possession of it which treatment represents and of which plotting is a part.

In the theatre this is no less true than it is elsewhere, but true in a special sense, inasmuch as in the story that a playwright tells both the narrative and the narrator are omitted. So great is the difference between the dramatic use to which a playwright puts a story and the story itself that the world's better dramas are scarcely recognizable in the source materials upon which they have been founded, the germinal ideas which have called them into being, or the prose synopses to which they have been reduced.

The distance which separates "Macbeth" from Holinshed's "Chronicle of England and Scotland," or "Julius Caesar" and "Anthony and Cleopatra" from North's Plutarch is the measure of Shakespeare's greatness as a poetic dramatist, exactly as the distance which divides the actual events in the Scottsboro case from John Wexley's handling of them in "They Shall Not Die," or Alice Longworth's daily life in Washington from the particular action in which Lucy Chase Wayne is involved in Miss Dayton's and Mr. Kaufman's "First Lady" is the measure of the dramatic talents of these totally different playwrights.

In an interview he granted to a reporter on the now-vanished *World*, Eugene O'Neill once explained the origins of his "Emperor Jones." By doing this in such detail he stated as clearly as anyone could, especially for those who remember with admiration his planning of the play, the differences which separate source materials from treatment, story-telling from plotting, and straight narration from that incessantly illustrative form of plotting which playwriting necessitates.

> The idea for "The Emperor Jones" [said Mr. O'Neill] came from an old circus man I knew. This man told me a story current in Haiti concerning the late President Sam. This was to the effect that Sam said they'd never get him with a lead bullet; that he would get himself first with a silver one. . . . This notion about the silver bullet struck me, and I made a note of the story. About six months later I got the idea of the woods, but I couldn't see how it could be done on the stage, and I passed it up again. A year elapsed. One day I was reading of the religious feasts in the Congo and the uses to which the drum is put there: how it starts at a normal pulse and is slowly intensified until the heart-beat of everyone present corresponds to the frenzied beat of the drum. There was an idea and an experiment. How would this sort of thing work on an audience in the theatre? The effect of the tropical forest on the human imagination was honestly come by. It was the result of my own experience while prospecting for gold in Spanish Honduras.

In the case of "The Emperor Jones," as in the case of each new play we see, even when we have no knowledge of its source materials or the germinal ideas which have contributed to its writing, the story being told tells more than the story that it tells. If we listen to it only for its narrative values, we hear merely a fraction of what it has to say. The manner in which it is being told also tells a story; a story of equal, if not of greater, interest to us as playgoers—and that is the story of the dramatic gifts and purposes, of

(*Continued on page* 14)

Skull

By EDWARD WEISMILLER

THE mind, and some thin longing that ensnared it,
Were outraged here. In one brief sullen thrust
The bullet tapped the skull, and so prepared it
For occupancy of dust:

And that was long ago, before this season
Wrote its precarious legend on the leaf.
Here flesh was forfeit. Simply, with adequate reason,
Waiving consent or grief,

The mind forsook its trim elaborate tower,
Its windowed room, so artfully contrived.
All beauty it controlled before that hour
The stinging lead was hived—

The vision, all the intricate ways of seeing,
The pallid flesh bemused by its own doom—
Gave over then. But the bullet remains, there being
At length, sufficient room.

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Setting the American Mold

JEFFERSON IN POWER. By Claude G. Bowers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1936. $3.75.

Reviewed by JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

THIS volume is a sequel to the author's earlier "Jefferson and Hamilton" published in 1925. The latter dealt with the years up to 1800 when Jefferson was struggling against Hamilton for his own conception of American democracy. The present book deals wholly with the eight years following, during which Jefferson sat in the White House and wielded the reins of power as President. The period is one of the most controversial and misrepresented in all our history. At the time itself passions were deeply aroused in the infant republic made up of extremely jealous states and sections, and with an undeveloped system of party and political life. In America, politics have always tended to bitter attacks on individuals rather than on principles, and few men in English public life have ever suffered such cruel and contemptible aspersions on their personal characters as has fallen to the lot of almost every successive president in our own country.

JEFFERSON PULLING DOWN THE FEDERAL PARTY—*From Adams's "History of the United States."*

Moreover, history teaches us that economics and religion are two of the most potent factors in arousing passion and unreason. Jefferson had successfully endeavored to alter the relations of society to both these factors. The abolition of entail and primogeniture in Virginia had made him many and fierce enemies in his own state; and his work for freedom of religion and the abolition of state churches had won him the animosity of the clergy throughout much of the country. This was peculiarly the case in New England where the clergy formed not only an entrenched class but, with the richer laymen, controlled to a large extent the politics of the section. That was also the section in which lived the most narrow-minded, bigoted, vindictive, and traitorous of the remaining leaders of the Federalist Party. To the leaders of that section, Jefferson was anathema and anti-Christ. It is almost incredible to what depths many clergy and leading laymen, who considered themselves gentlemen, descended in their attacks on the President.

Later, for several generations, the most widely read histories of the United States were mostly produced in New England, and the contemporary vilification of the New England Federalists was continued by local and provincial historians writing in the Federalist tradition. Boston was for long the literary and publishing center of the nation, and from filial piety and other reasons, the descendants of the Federalists who had fought Jefferson, and their friends and social sets, remained anti-Jefferson until the false picture of him became fairly set in historical writing. To allow that Jefferson had been right was to say that leading New Englanders had been deeply wrong, and that does not come easy in New England. For the most part, a fair appraisal of Jefferson had to await the writing of history by men of other sections. As I have also recently pointed out, the historical treatment of Jefferson still arouses passions because the issues for which he fought are still living and not mere stories from a dusty past.

Mr. Bowers has not only always been a strong Democrat but has had the greatest admiration for Jefferson. As they say that men are born either Platonists or Aristotelians, so we in America are born Jeffersonians or Hamiltonians. Bowers is a Jeffersonian partisan but has evidently greatly matured and broadened since his earlier book. Perhaps his life abroad as the distinguished American Ambassador to Spain in these troubled years has widened and mellowed his views of men and political organizations. At any rate, his present book shows a marked advance over his previous ones not only in style but also in fairness and balance. I personally have found all his books stimulating, and in spite of faults few men have done more to arouse interest among the people in crucial episodes of the past in the nation's history.

His new book, though not his most exciting, is, I think, his best. It is a relief, for example, to read simply of a man's "gray eyes" instead of the "hazel orbs of the Senator," and that sort of stylistic change runs through practically the entire text. Moreover, the dramatis personæ are not divided into angels and devils. Even Hamilton gets his due and is treated, as it seems to me, fairly and considerately. We meet John Marshall chiefly in what even his laudatory biographers have considered the most unfortunate episode in his career but he gets no more than what should justly be given to him for that. In view of all the false writing about the attitude of Jefferson toward the courts, Bowers's treatment is just and illuminating. The eight years portrayed are among the most important in our history as marking the definite defeat of the Federalists with their aristocratic caste notion of government and the "setting" of the mold of democracy. It is well that readers should have a full account of this period written in a spirit sympathetic to the administration, and I find in this book more of sympathy and less of straight partisanship than I would have expected.

The problems of the present day are so insistent that it is inevitable that one should look to see what so ardent a Democrat and Jeffersonian as Mr. Bowers finds to praise in the eight years' administration of his hero. Among other things we may note the strict economy enforced; the cutting down of appropriations demanded by the various departments; the reduction in the number of government employees, as also of the government debt; the maintenance of complete freedom of speech and press; and Jefferson's constant refusal to use any form of coercion against even his most violent detractors. His attitude toward the constitution is also stressed. Jefferson fully believed that the purchase of Louisiana was unconstitutional but explained his reasons and at the same time twice urged that a constitutional amendment should be submitted so that the action might be validated in a constitutional way. When the time came that he foresaw a surplus in the Treasury which might wisely be used for internal improvements and even a national university, he realized that these measures were also unconstitutional and asked that an amendment might be passed three years ahead of the time when he believed the Treasury situation would permit the actions to be taken. He was for changing the constitution to meet new needs but changing it only by the method provided and not by executive or legislative action. The theory, claimed to be held by some, that because of Jefferson's liberalism and interest in the ordinary citizen he would ride roughshod over the constitution in order to legislate measures which he personally might think beneficial to the people would apparently secure scant approval from Mr. Bowers.

The book has both a historical and

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timely interest, and is well done. There is practically no new material in it in spite of the fact that in the bibliography the author lists the manuscripts in both the archives of Spain and of the American Embassy in Madrid. So far as I could find there is no new fact derived from those sources and no footnote reference to them. There are also a few rather striking omissions. None of the numerous volumes of Professor Chinard, the leading student of Jefferson in America and to whom all others are indebted, are mentioned, nor is the great ten-volume "History of the United States," by Henry Adams, listed with his other works although indispensable to the student of the period, and obviously used by Bowers himself. That there is no new material is nothing against the book. History, like some of the sciences, has reached the point where organization and interpretation of existing material is perhaps of even more importance and value than the spading up of "new facts" for a while. In this case, whether or not the author has dug up a new fact is far less important than whether or not he has given an interpretation of the already known facts of an important era in a way to make his presentation worth reading. I believe that he has, and that his book is important as a corrective to much that has passed as history and truth.

James Truslow Adams, author of "The Epic of America," "Hamiltonian Principles," and "Jeffersonian Principles," is one of the leading historians of America.

A Belated Collection

THE POEMS OF BEN JONSON. Edited by Bernard H. Newdigate. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1936.

MR. NEWDIGATE'S handsome volume brings together for the first time the shorter poems of Ben Jonson. That this has never been done before is further evidence, if such were necessary, of the neglect, except by specialists, into which so important a poet has fallen. He has been unpopular recently because, both as a lyric poet and as a dramatist, he lived too much in his own time, and made his own time too literally his subject matter. He was also, in spite of his vigorous energy, his intellectual and verbal force, too much of a pure craftsman, with the pure craftsman's lack of overtones. With Jonson the poetic wax is carved by a knife, not moulded by a flame. Everything he wrote is firm, intellectual, solid, clear, and authoritative; we cannot help respecting it and the man behind it. But he only occasionally warms us; he is too precisely accurate to please, except in the abstract, any generation that has been weaned of romanticism.

Yet in spite of these characteristics—perhaps because of them—Jonson is a poet who can profitably be studied today. We may hope, with poems easily available, that more than one satiric or political poet of our time will profit from his sharpness and accurate integrity.

Life on a Showboat

CHILDREN OF OL' MAN RIVER. The Life and Times of a Showboat Trouper. By Billy Bryant. New York: Lee Furman. 1936. $3.

Reviewed by BEN LUCIEN BURMAN

HERE is a career picaresque and colorful whose unfolding should produce a volume rich and glamorous. And in the very early chapters this is such a volume. But with deep regret the observer is compelled to state that the book rather fails to achieve its early promise.

The reasons would seem probably twofold. The native river dweller, as he sits on the river bank whittling at a branch of willow, watching a puffing towboat go past with a tow of coal, is a rather curious and perhaps highly prejudiced person. He regards all those born within what Harry Hansen would call whistle distance of a steamboat, be they steamboaters, shantyboaters, or shore people, as members of a close fraternity, as though by some mystic chemistry the waters of the river were part of their blood stream. All others are alien. Billy Bryant, though born in Brooklyn, has been on the river many, many years, more than enough to compensate for the accident of birth and so to merit admittance to the society. Yet, and here arises the first objection to his book, it seems to this observer he has never in the full sense of the word become a riverman. His point of view is still that of the metropolis beyond the East River. It is a sophisticated, a city point of view; the true life of the river is always rustic.

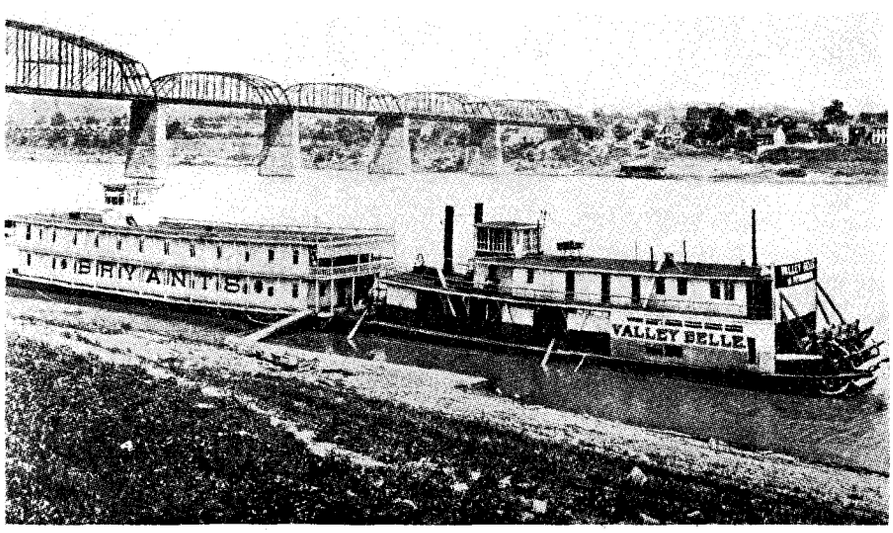
In the mind of the river dweller, with his strange ways and deep prejudices, Billy Bryant commits a cardinal sin with his title, "Children of Ol' Man River." For to the dour waterman, the phrase Ol' Man River never existed except in the mind of a New York song writer. Beautiful as the song may be, and sung as it was with such quality, the riverman knows it is not a river song, no not even a negro song. But he will only speak his mind softly, and then only in the presence of the understanding, for the song has become fixed as a typical river song in the minds of the multitude.

The second probable reason for the book's failure fully to achieve its purpose has a source far from the river. Billy Bryant is an actor, a comedian. And this book has the faults of so many books written by actors,—the inability to dramatize in words the exciting and colorful adventures they enact so vividly on the stage. The adventures, the dramatic moments are always at hand, but they tend to be flattened out under a steamroller of unskilful prose. It has, too, the writing actor's verboseness, his substitution of personal reaction for adventure and incident. Billy Bryant is too apt to tell us about the state of his mind, when the reader's interest lies in knowing how the boat behaved when the ice gorge broke.

Lest it be thought that for the river devotee, and happily the tribe seems to be growing, there is nothing of interest in the volume, this observer hastens to add that there are numerous stories of real worth, the story for example of the way Billy met his wife through a message floating in a bottle. But these nuggets are buried too deep in river clay. It makes for hard mining.

Billy Bryant undoubtedly has a grand book up his showman's and pitchman's sleeve. But to bring it fully to light he must either himself develop a more skilful writing craftsmanship, or call in some outsider who can write it for him. I hope his publishers remember. When it's finished I want to be the first to read it.

Ben Lucien Burman is author of "Steamboat Round the Bend," a lively description of Mississippi River life.



ONE OF BILLY BRYANT'S WATER HOMES

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Sailing Through the Land on Rollers

THE ENCHANTED VOYAGE. By Robert Nathan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. $2.

Reviewed by ROBERT STRUNSKY

DESTINY seems to have shaped Robert Nathan to write about the timid soul, the quiet, middle-aged little man, the poor but honest girl. His favorite characters are the victims of economic circumstance which carries with it a proletarian suggestion, but Nathan would never be acceptable to this school. His approach is too mild; his exposition too elfin. As in "One More Spring" he has used the same theme again under slightly different conditions and many of the good things that were said about his epic of Central Park can be repeated almost verbatim about "The Enchanted Voyage."

Nathan is perhaps the nation's most successful dealer in fantasy. It virtually amounts to a monopoly with him. Besides having an instinct for it, his style is irreproachable, containing a sustained note of soft poetic feeling which wraps whatever story he happens to be writing in a haze of tender sympathy. He handles it with great discretion so that it never becomes mawkish or incredible. It maintains an even undertone of melancholy which persists even when the moment is joyous or comic. Although life is always closing in on his characters, the effect somehow is seldom tragic. Mr. Nathan rarely goes deeper than pathos, a mood to which he is strongly attached.

Hector Pecket has built a sailboat in the backyard of his home in the Bronx and each night climbs aboard to escape the oppressive problems of daylight and the rasping importunities of his wife, Sarah. He is a carpenter with virtually no trade, a sort of poetic carpenter remote from practical issues such as making a living, or getting ahead in the world. His wife is a common scold. Each evening he leaves her far behind, sailing the seven seas, yet maintaining a fixed point.

His boat, from her viewpoint, is only a further aggravation, and she arranges to sell it behind his back, first equipping it with wheels to move it more easily to Schultz, the butcher, who is going to buy it. Hector discovers her plans and boards the vessel in the backyard. The night is wild and lowering. A savage storm breaks, matching the inner turmoil of his heart. The good ship *Sarah Pecket* slips her moorings, rolls to the street with Hector at the helm, and starts on its enchanted and involuntary voyage.

In the course of his travels Hector takes aboard an unemployed waitress named Mary Kelly and a down-at-the-heels dentist who in the absence of patients has become an itinerant knife-and-scissors grinder. With this crew the *Sarah Pecket* proceeds on her adventures. They are of a mild and friendly nature—J. B. Priestley adventures — with everybody good, but sad companions.

Out of this book emerges the reaffirmation that Nathan is a warmhearted writer with a fine style, and very little besides. It is not another "One More Spring," although cast in the same mold and maintaining a similar mood. It is even slenderer than his previous book. It is the story of escape from difficulties that are at best minute. Its moments of irony and satire are rare, and when present, so veiled as to be virtually indiscernible.

Since Nathan is the only person doing this kind of work in the country it is probably wrong to quarrel with it, but the fact is that his position is extremely vulnerable. The fault lies in conception, for while it is true that he works in the field of the imagination the question is whether he works hard enough. The notion of a sailboat on wheels taking to the arterial highways of the country is a pleasant bit of fiction, a little on the cute side, but essentially thin.

It needs the embellishment of incident and adventure which might have been provided in the subsequent experiences of the ship and its crew. But it wasn't, and the story comes weakly to an end with the reunion of Pecket and his wife, and the union of Mary Kelly and the dentist. It leaves you feeling friendly toward Mr. Nathan, but a little up in the air.

Robert Strunsky, who is on the staff of The New York Sun, *is a writer interested in the fanciful and whimsical.*

Julian Green's Midnight Realm

MIDNIGHT. By Julian Green. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1936. $2.50.

THE body of his work, to which Mr. Green now adds one more volume, is so closely knit into a characteristic pattern that it is possible to form certain collective judgments. Clearly he has marked out as his literary province a recondite and mystical realm, most aptly described and bounded by such of his titles as "The Closed Garden," "The Dark Journey," "The Strange River," "The Dreamer," and now "Midnight." Here the psychic takes the center of the stage, and the physical intrudes only as a monstrous accident. Here our common logic of cause and effect holds no authority, replaced by the unpredictable tangents of forces unnamed, unseen, unlimited by earthly laws. Light is subordinate to darkness. The characters are psychological counterparts of their background, distorted puppets that dance upon strings leading to no traceable

JULIAN GREEN

source. They do not have motives, or passions; they have tensions, that are released in spasmodic moments of explosion. Neither time nor place is recognizable, shrouded both in a heavy atmosphere through which nothing may be perceived but the shadowy movements of the actors.

Such an inclusive description is indeed the best possible review of "Midnight." In this book Mr. Green has pursued his pattern to its furthest development, and every characteristic above stated is here most intensely present. There can be no questioning the concentrated artistry of this work. It would not be too much to compare the second half of the book, with its deepening, sinister power and its tragic, doomed ending, with "The Fall of the House of Usher." Yet in view of the fact that "Midnight" seems to be the ultimate expression of Mr. Green's present purposes, certain questions do arise to be answered. We have been examining, in the work of Jules Romains, a twentieth century France in which the tremors of public events are reflected from Paris, down through the provinces, into the consciousness of every citizen, in some reaction or other. Where, in France, does Mr. Green find his characters, who feel no such tremors, who read no papers, who hear no news, who never talk of politics or government, or peace or war, or France,—who are not, in other words, alive? And more important, where in France does Mr. Green himself live, where no such ideas intrude upon his own consciousness strongly enough to make the slightest impress upon his work? It can only appear to us a literary maladjustment, and our loss as well as his, that Mr. Green does not turn his superb talents to a consideration of the life that abounds everywhere about him, but has preferred to construct an unreal, escapist, midnight realm.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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A Paranoic World

WRITERS have a habit of taking over new words from the scientists and using them in ways which science never contemplated. "Evolution" was made literary, for example, in the nineteenth century by Brunetière and others with disastrous effects upon clear thinking in criticism; nor will the recent wholesale adoption of Freud's specific terms by the literary fraternity be forgotten by those who like to see people mean what they say as well as say what they mean. But this is one way in which language grows, and many a specific word by the time the writers have stuffed it with a general significance becomes truly descriptive of new ideas, new modes of living, or new mental habits in contemporary society.

What "paranoia" specifically means any dictionary will tell you—but not to your satisfaction. Specifically it is a symptom of definite changes in the structure of the brain, and is incurable. The paranoic is irrationally suspicious, he is dominated by irrational fears, in the broadest use of the scientific term he is often subject to delusions of grandeur.

Now you cannot indict the world as you cannot indict a nation; and yet it is a fair question whether the world—or at least our culture, our civilization as those who call themselves civilized know it—is not in this year of 1936 paranoic. The answer to the question is negative. The world, our society, our civilization, is not diseased in brain, is not even incapable of rationality. It is probably, by and large and in its potentialities, as good a world as ever. But if, using the writer's license to stretch a scientific term to cover a current condition, we ask whether the nations—more here, less there—do not exhibit paranoic tendencies to a morbid degree—are not suspicious to the verge of irrationality, are not fearful to the point where fear becomes morbidity, are not afflicted with delusions of grandeur, the answer is too tragically, yes.

Everyone knows how common in normal life is the paranoic tendency. Everyone knows how many men and women in the most ordinary sets of experiences are dominated by fear, are suspicious without cause, are afflicted with delusions of their own importance. Here is a dark sea of dread and hate and egoism, always flowing beneath the surface of living, always ready to rise with a tide of misfortune or disorder, never entirely irrational, since man is born to trouble, never reasonable, because these fears, hates, suspicions, break through the control of reason whenever the pressure of circumstance is too strong.

And certainly this world preparing for war because it fears war; this world society repeating the preparations for 1914 with only mechanical differences, because 1918 brought no peace without victory, is definitely paranoic in the broad sense we have given to the term. The lessons of history teach, say the Germans, that Germany must be able to inspire fear in her neighbors. But fear (as always) rouses every paranoic mind in Europe outside Germany, to suspicion, to hate, to the desire to inspire fear in return. Fear, says a recent correspondent, is the key to the violence of the Spanish revolution. Each faction fears the others. The renewal of the Roman empire is Mussolini's phrase for his Italians, a paranoic appeal to the delusions of grandeur which have so often wrecked peoples whose dark tides of egoism have been swirled upward into the light—Sweden, France, Spain, the Roman empire itself when it pushed its boundaries beyond the power of holding, have all known the urge and the revenge of this egoism of paranoia.

It may be said that the fears, if not the egoistic delusions, of modern society are rational. The unarmed man is struck down. The moderate leader is destroyed by the ruthless dictator. The nation afraid of war is bullied by the nation unafraid. While the sentimentalist dreams of universal peace in which he keeps what his fathers have got for him, the realist, hungry and afraid of the hunger of his own peoples, prepares to annihilate security and snatch safety out of disaster.

But yes, of course. The world's complex—to use another stretched term—is by definition complicated. There is no formula for peace, there is at most a will for it. But paranoia destroys the will. This much at least those who believe that the way to get war is to prepare for it, can say to themselves and to their neighbors. There is reason behind your fears, but your fears themselves are destroying reason. The cure for the world's disorders is infinitely complex, but their causes are relatively simple. Too many people want what they have not got, too many people keep what they have not earned. And like an insidious fire streaking through this eternal situation, is the paranoia which lights every emotional impulse into heat—the suspicion, which at bottom is fear, kindled by an irresponsible press, by the violent self-interest of strong men, by the egoism of governments, by the morbid romanticism of war, by the instinctive terror of the man who is weaker than his tools, and who says, unless I strike first I will be struck.

It is not the machine age which is the villain in this modern tragedy. It is not capitalism or communism or fascism, which are all of them modes of action capable of good when used for and not against the interests of humanity as a whole. At this moment in 1936, the spectre is the paranoic tendency, loosed by circumstance, gaining ground even here in self-dependent America, capable of having its suspicious will satisfied at the cost of catastrophe. The realist is he who realizes this fact, who, well aware of the incredible difficulties that lie before even a sane civilization in process of change and readjustment, sees that these nightmares of jealousy, these incitements to distrust, and these outbursts of egoism, are multiplications of the fears of the poor paranoic who carries a pistol to protect himself from the enemies he exaggerates in his imagination, and believes that he is God's man against whom the rest of creation is in league. He is insane. The world is not. Its ills are treatable. But only by those in whom the paranoic tendency has been rooted out by reason.

Instead of reds and fascists, pacifists and militarists, look for the paranoic in our midst. Whether newspaper heroes, or just plain frightened men and women, they are the inciters of disaster. And note well that paranoia and patriotism, though a thousand miles apart in true meaning, both begin with a p, and the noble word is particularly susceptible to infection by the ugly one.

Ten Years Ago

Rebecca West's critical evaluation of Carl Sandburg, which appeared in book form as the preface to his "Selected Poems," was first published as the leading article in *The Saturday Review* of September 4th, 1926. "*Carl Sandburg expresses the whole life of the Middle West today,*" Miss West wrote in this issue. "*He has learned his country by heart. . . . The main determinant of his art is the power of his native idiom to deal with the inner life of man. He is not a talent that is too easily accepted in this age, which is inclined to regard poetry as necessarily lyric and to demand that the poet shall write brief and perfect verse; but the reason he cannot satisfy such standards is that his art is dominated by an image so vast that it requires as house-room not one but a thousand poems.*"

Carl Sandburg's latest work, "The People, Yes," recently published by Harcourt, Brace was reviewed in *The Saturday Review* of August 22nd, by William Rose Benét.

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Letters to the Editor: Transition *and* *Literary Experimentalism*

"Spook Writing"

SIR:—A few weeks ago you devoted an editorial to a number of contributions to an unnamed magazine under the heading of "Spook Writing." Readers of the magazine in question know, of course, that you were referring to *transition*, the only magazine in English devoted to literary experimentalism. I don't know if this magazine is intended for ordinary readers, but I was very much surprised to find a writer in the *Saturday Review of Literature* treating the contents so unsympathetically: I would have supposed that writers of every kind and all readers interested in the future of literature would have realized that the contents of this magazine would have to be taken into account. *Transition* is the only magazine in English that takes seriously the most important literary problem of today—the problem of the renewal of language. It deals, too, with the effort to reach back to myth, to the beginning of literature, for, as the editor, Eugene Jolas, says in an introductory article, "I believe that the literature of the future will tend towards the presentation of the spirit inherent in the magic tale and poetry, towards the poet's exploration of heretofore hidden strata of human personality." I consider that some of the most beautiful pieces of prose writing that I have read in recent years have appeared in issues of *transition*, and in this particular number there are both prose and poetry of remarkable achievement. I should like to quote this poem by James Agee in the number you so mockingly criticize: I should say that it is continuing the sprung rhythm, the revolutionary experiment not accepted in his own day, of Gerard Manley Hopkins.—

Vertigral

LYRIC

Demure morning morning margin
glows cold flows foaled:
Fouled is flown float float easily earth
before demurely:

Chance gems leaves their harbors
Sparkle above leaves whom light lifted

Drilling in their curly throats severally
sweet ordinate phrases
Smooth ancestral phrases.
Teaching: touching: sinuous dis-
unison.
Drinking: drafting: each of all
serenest pleasure.

Bring floral earth your breast before
her,
Afford your breast before the morning.

Demurely, the early margin:
Fouled is fallen flower flower fear-
less earth before: serenely:

A SONG

Give over, give over,
Whose grievance ever yet delayed the
sun?
White flowers the dew, the summer's
work is over

"LISTEN! ANY MOMENT NOW HE'LL BEGIN RECITING 'TREES'!"

And your kind love, your lover
Is no man now, and now's another one.
Give over, give over:
What profits an arraignment of the sun.

You remark in your editorial that "one of the editors of the magazine . . . avers that Abstract Art no longer needs defence." The sentence mockingly quoted is from a very thoughtful essay built around a sentence in one of George Berkeley's Dialogues: it is from an essay by James Johnson Sweeney dealing with the fact that we confound what actually belongs to touch and movement with what we really see. Let me say that everyone interested in the technique and philosophy of literature finds *transition* always exciting. Amongst other items it has published Joyce's "Work in Progress" and modern American writers like Archibald MacLeish and Hart Crane. It is now being published in America, and this ought to excite an interest here in the problems it is dealing with.

MARY M. COLUM.

South Norwalk, Conn.

What is Logic?

SIR:—Although the *Saturday Review* is hardly the most appropriate place in the world for multiplying metaphysical subtleties, I feel that some comment should be made on the review, "Logic Takes a Holiday," in the August 15 issue. Has not Professor Jastrow here indulged himself in just one of those blind credulities, common to the human race, whose prevalence he himself so deplores? Does he not exhibit the tendency to call an opinion with which he disagrees, forthwith "illogical"?

When Dr. Jastrow charges his author with "an unnecessary betrayal of the fundamentals of logic," merely because the latter has admitted the *possibility* of prophetic vision, parallel to scientific discovery, he must mean that there is some meaning of the word "logic," to which science absolutely conforms, but with which prophecy of any kind is in complete disharmony. Now, the question is, what is that meaning?

I discover only two senses in which the word "logic" may be used—a narrower and a wider sense. In its narrower meaning, to be "logical" means to obey the so-called Laws of Thought—Identity, Non-Contradiction, Excluded Middle. In this sense, a prophetic utterance may be every bit as "logical" as the latest scientific formula; all that is required is that it be internally consistent (free from contradiction), and that it state something definite, without ambiguity. Although a great many prophecies have been incoherent and vague, there is surely nothing in the nature of prophecy to make it necessarily so. A prophecy, in short, may be a piece of rational discourse; we may understand perfectly what it *means*. The wider meaning of "logic," however, seems to be what Professor Jastrow has in mind. This wider meaning has reference, not to mere consistency, but to what is generally called the "uniformity of nature." Anything is "logical" or "rational" if it conforms to this uniformity; "illogical" or "irrational" if it does not. Professor Jastrow evidently holds that any "miraculous" event contradicts the uniformity of nature, and must therefore be rejected as impossible of occurrence in an ordered universe. Philosophically, this is merely one possible view; whereas Professor Jastrow seems to consider it a self-evident truth.

My conclusion is that on the whole there is good ground for claiming science to be more *empirical* than prophecy, but no ground at all for asserting that it is one whit more "logical." Unless one accepts an iron-mailed, naturalistic determinism, "logic" simply "has nothing to do with the case."

ROBERT W. BRETALL.

Evanston, Ill.

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Thunder on the Left

HALF WAY WITH ROOSEVELT. By Ernest K. Lindley. New York: The Viking Press. 1936. $2.75.

AFTER THE NEW DEAL, WHAT? By Norman Thomas. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1936. $2.

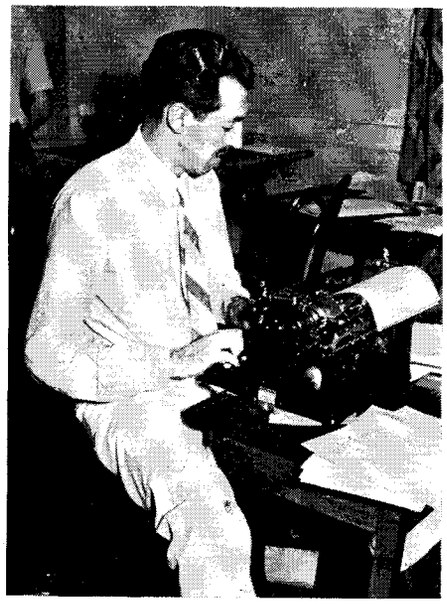
Reviewed by ROBERT C. BROOKS

DISREGARDING the risk of having his manuscript land in the editorial wastebasket the reviewer of "Half Way with Roosevelt" has decided to do with it what he has often desired to do in other similar cases, that is to deal with the book in the form of a critical consideration of the publisher's blurb. Hence the numerous quotations in what follows.

"Its title holds a double meaning which readers will discover for themselves," according to the Viking Press. As a matter of fact the publishers might have claimed more than a double meaning. To incautious readers the words "half way" suggest at first blush that Franklin D. Roosevelt is to have a second term in the White House, thereby necessitating the addition of still another volume to the three excellent works already to Mr. Lindley's credit in this field. Incorrect; there is not a word of prophecy in the book as to the outcome of the election in November. Again the crytic phrase referred to above might be taken to mean that the author goes only half way in support of the policies of the present administration. Also incorrect; while mere quantitative analysis may be misleading in this connection it is a fact that Mr. Lindley's final summary puts down only seven debits as against sixteen credits to the account of President Roosevelt. Third, although apparent to the discriminating reader somewhat earlier, what "half way" really means is definitely stated only in the last paragraph of the book, as follows: "By a longer-range view—say five years—his [Mr. Roosevelt's] measures are not even half measures." In other words Mr. Lindley's criticism is directed from an advanced progressive position. To cyclonic thunder against the New Deal on the reactionary right he adds a sort of premonitory thunder on the left.

"Not a campaign document, this book is an objective history of the first three Roosevelt years—vastly informative for the open-minded reader who is tired of campaign ranting." Certainly Mr. Lindley's extended study is not a campaign document; it is far too independent, too well reasoned, and too thoroughly supported by facts and figures to deserve so mediocre a classification. Nevertheless, in the reviewer's opinion "Half Way with Roosevelt" is by far the most effective plea for the present administration, *as a whole,* that has yet been published. On the other hand the reference to it as "objective history" is subject to heavy discount. Objective history of so eventful and so controversial a triennium is not possible immediately after its close.

"It gives the most penetrating portrait ever published of Roosevelt's own personality." Taken in connection with the admirable full length characterization presented in Mr. Lindley's earlier book, "Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Career in Progressive Democracy"—a characterization which is brought down to date rather than revised in the present volume—the above statement may be accepted. As a matter of fact the personality of the President is discussed keenly not only in



ERNEST K. LINDLEY

the chapter entitled "A Brief Guide to Mr. Roosevelt," but also in the later pages devoted to the possibility that we may keep out of war under his guidance. Considering the number of foul plays in domestic affairs that have been called against Mr. Roosevelt by would-be political umpires the reader is rather amused to learn that his strongest phrase of condemnation is: "It's dirty ball." The occasional unconventional utterance of the President is delightfully illustrated by what he said to the new minister (diplomatic, not ecclesiastical) who was being presented to him with all the formality usual on such occasions: "I see you have your speech written out. So have I. Suppose you give me your manuscript and I give you mine. Then we can have a good talk."

"It estimates the strength and weakness of Wallace, Farley, Hull, Perkins, Morgenthau, Tugwell, Hopkins, Ickes, and many others." Yes; and these estimates, based on close personal contacts, are marked by great clarity and complete fairness. Among them the characterization of James A. Farley will astound many readers who have been misled by partisan clamor into believing him merely a vulgar spoilsman. Instead of confining the above list to high government officials the publishers of "Half Way with Roosevelt" might have extended it to include all the more prominent statesmen and politicians of the day, both Republican and Democratic, whom Mr. Lindley has had ample opportunity to study in his work as a newspaper correspondent. Also the Viking Press might have noted the fact that the author comments fully and trenchantly on the work of his fellow commentators, applying the acid test with sharply etched results to Walter Lippmann, Herbert Agar, Mark Sullivan, James F. Warburg, Raoul Desvernine, and Charles P. Taft. For reasons scarcely requiring elucidation the reviewer has not included William Randolph Hearst among the foregoing bright luminaries of political argumentation. To. Mr. Lindley the Lord of San Simeon is neither jabberwock, jub-jub bird, nor frumious bandersnatch; on the contrary poor rich Mr. Hearst is, in his public capacity, simply "a Red-baiter and, as such, one of America's leading breeders of radicals."

"It points out the startling fact that the national debt has actually been made lighter since 1932." Republican papers please copy. Of course the above statement rests upon relative rather than upon absolute figures; thus, as Mr. Lindley interprets the great mass of statistics he has gathered, "the net federal debt when Mr. Hoover left office was forty-eight per cent of the national income for 1932—but the net debt on April 30, 1936, was only forty-four per cent of the national income for 1935."

"It compares America's recent history with that of other democracies today." Unquestionably this is one of the most valuable of Mr. Lindley's contributions. The net result of his far-flung summaries is that the numerous disparaging comparisons between the Rooseveltian New Deal on the one hand and the somewhat similar anti-depression policies pursued by the self-governing countries of Europe on the other, are shown to be largely bunk. As a small but significant illustration Mr. Lindley points out that American paeans of praise for the balanced British budget have been succeeded by deep and discreet silence now that it has become unbalanced again because of the government's rearmament program.

It would take us too far afield to consider, one by one, other statements made by the publishers of "Half Way with Roosevelt" regarding Mr. Lindley's masterly and independent treatment both of the activities and of the agencies, alphabetical and otherwise, of the present administration at Washington. Many readers, of course, will be outraged by his words of praise; many others by his words of condemnation: both will have plenty of facts and figures to take under con-

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sideration. As to the catalogue of criticisms the reviewer must say that he is not greatly impressed by the author's statement that Mr. Roosevelt should have "done something about the Supreme Court in 1933," to which rather vague phrase Mr. Lindley adds, more ingenuously than cogently, the words: "I don't know just what, I confess." Otherwise, however, the general treatment of the numerous governmental topics indicated above, which make up the great bulk of the book, seems judicious in the extreme.

In "After the New Deal, What?" Mr. Norman Thomas takes up much the same topics as Mr. Lindley but, of course, from a position farther toward the radical left. However, while Mr. Lindley discards out of hand what he variously calls fearsome, rubber-stamped, gawdy, and blatant labels—notably socialism, communism, and fascism—Mr. Thomas places the latter in the forefront of his discussion. As a socialist he knew from the beginning that the New Deal was not even a half way program; also that it was foredoomed to failure. While admitting small temporary successes in certain of its details he comes not to praise, nor even to discuss critically, but to bury it—thus clearing the ground that we may press forward the sooner to a far more desirable goal, the Coöperative Commonwealth. Despite the above outstanding differences between the two books there are various close similarities; for example both agree that most of the business leaders in the United States are selfish, stupid, and reactionary. Both agree that something should be done about the Supreme Court but while Mr. Lindley, as we have just seen, is anything but dogmatic on the subject, Mr. Thomas comes out strongly for the adoption at the earliest possible moment of the Farmers' and Workers' Rights Amendment, and for the calling of a constitutional convention as soon as the country is ready for really sweeping revision. Both agree that another world war is quite likely to occur in the near future but the menace seems far greater to Mr. Thomas. As to the major question propounded by "After the New Deal, What?" the author's answer is "probably Fascism." By far the most interesting pages of the book are devoted to an analysis of the forces and personalities favoring this solution and to the development of a comprehensive strategy by which it may be defeated.

In spite of the author's demurral "After the New Deal, What?" is clearly a campaign document, as such partisan, of course; still it may be rated one of the best examples of that form of political literature because of its lucidity, forcefulness, and entire sincerity. It deserves careful comparison with the recently published "What is Communism?" by Mr. Earl Browder. Now that the presidential candidates of two minor parties have made professions of faith in book form we may regret that neither Mr. Roosevelt nor Mr. Landon has done likewise.

The Skies Brighten

I'M FOR ROOSEVELT. By Joseph P. Kennedy. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1936. $1.

Reviewed by THOMAS H. GAMMACK

UNFORTUNATELY for the President, his most articulate lieutenants have not been those in whom the public has the firmest confidence. He must be gratified by the publication of this book by Mr. Kennedy, former Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Mr. Kennedy was a spectacular success in Washington as he had been in industry and in the financial markets. When he took office in July, 1934, his outlook was anything but hopeful. He could, at first, look only to the President for encouragement. His Commission was to administer two Acts which had been passed against the bitter and almost unanimous opposition of the financial community. Liberals and radicals who were powerful at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue distrusted him.

In his fourteen months of office he won the confidence of business in his associates, in the two Acts administered by his Commission, and in himself. Liberal distrust gave way to admiration. In the hundreds of editorials published at the time of his resignation Right, Left, and Center approval was unstinted and virtually unanimous.

Until now, Mr. Kennedy's views on major political questions he has kept pretty much to himself. As an intimate of the President he undoubtedly advised on policies outside the securities field but, in public, he talked of the Commission's particular problems. The gossip columns frequently reported him as opposing privately many of the New Deal policies.

Describing himself as an intimate friend of the President's, "a man of wealth as that term is generally understood," and the father of nine children, Mr. Kennedy explains that he publishes his opinions because of his concern for the future of his family and his anxiety as a citizen that "the facts about the President's philosophy be not lost in a fog of unworthy emotion."

The book is an enthusiastic and amazingly sweeping endorsement of Mr. Roosevelt's policies. It endorses specifically the AAA, the dollar's devaluation, the President's departure from his 1932 platform, the relief and public works administration, and he expresses no disapproval even of the NRA. Only the 1936 Revenue Act he finds unsound, "premised upon a fallacious economic principle."

Since the whole world has been debating these problems for four years or more, it is not surprising that Mr. Kennedy has failed to blaze new paths of reasoning. His arrangement of the pro-New Deal arguments is consistently effective, the most persuasive chapter being his defense of the President's consistent objectives. In a series of quotations from the Roosevelt 1932 campaign speeches, he spins out a political philosophy. The specific inconsistencies he hardly bothers to defend. Whether or not a policy "conflicts with the printed word, the party document, the Constitution, or the Ten Commandments . . . the man in the street . . . will still want somebody to tell him whether or not it is not good, whether he is safer or more prosperous with it or without it."

Of even more interest than his appraisal of specific measures is his en-

THE NEW DEAL PUTS THE UNEMPLOYED TO WORK
From "The Roosevelt Year" (Funk & Wagnalls)

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thusiasm for governmental "control" and "planning," his scorn of "certain rugged individualists" in the business community, and his belief that the 1936 election poses the question—Roosevelt or Ruin?

There is considerably more warmth in his admiration of the Administration's "control measures" than in his kind words for abstract individualism. He says:

> Clearly this administration is for a certain degree of regulation, and it is regulated individualism. But this is a necessary step, if we are to avoid real dictatorship and real loss of freedom. The question today is whether we should intelligently regulate our social life so as to assure the maintenance of a democracy, or should smash our regulatory machine and thus pave the way for dictatorship. Should we try to have a balance between regulation and individualism, or should we revert to an uncontrolled individualistic scheme?

The Roosevelt or Ruin thesis is stated baldly. This is a typical warning—

> If the people are deluded by the outpourings of those who shout for "an end of the Roosevelt dictatorship," their victory will be Pyrrhic and they will have opened the gate for a real dictator, unless the general objectives of the President are pursued. The nation cannot undergo another attack of depression even approximating the one from which we are just emerging.

It is from the President's opponents that he fears the aggravation of class hatred. "Certain it is," he writes,

> that should reactionaries step in and, under whatever cover of "doing the same thing better," begin undoing the accomplishments of the New Deal, they will destroy the present harmony existing between various classes. President Roosevelt has succeeded in uniting the interests of farmers, laborers, and the mass of business men by demonstrating the interdependence of their interests.

"I'm for Roosevelt" is addressed to the average business man; it is a savage attack on the preachings of Mr. Hearst and Old Dealers. The dialectics are effective and timely but will seem of no importance next year. What will be of lasting significance is Mr. Kennedy's enthusiastic support of increased governmental authority. He applauds the measures of control already instituted and he does not seem to fear their extension. It is significant and authoritative testimony.

But there should be more of it. It would help the puzzled citizens if he would prescribe in more detail the kind of "conscious control" he favors. Does he scoff at fears of excessive regimentation and bureaucracy because he is confident that the President can be trusted to avoid excesses or because he wants less individualism and more regulation?

Thomas H. Gammack, president of a stock exchange firm, served with Mr. Kennedy on the Securities Exchange Commission.

Little Autumn Rondo

By Dorothy Stott Shaw

ZOOM, comes the sun up, *caloroso,*
And the filigree frost on the willow's gold,
Con prestezza, how did it go so
Quickly away, and the night so cold!
Jays and chickadees, *prestamente,*
Shout together in cheerful choir;
A hawk drifts over them, *negligente;*
The chickadee's note goes higher and higher,
Flauto piccolo—and it is morning,
Golden and gorgeous and crisp and gay;
And then, with scarcely a comma of warning,
Tempo, ordinario—it is day.

The aspens keep playing *con dolcezza*
Their little gold cymbals all day long,
And the last of the meadowlarks pauses to raise a
Brief *Te Deum* of joyous song.
Sempre piano—the harvested hills
Lie tawny and wide in the muted sun;
The marching horizon with banners fills;
Arpeggiando—day is done
And brimming with purple are all the valleys;
Poco a poco the bird songs cease;
The moon comes up with a fragile chalice;
The sun goes down in a pool of peace.

Molto glissando, largo assai,
All is now silver that has been gold;
Far off in the crystal the great owls cry;
The frost slips in again, shiny and cold;
Gossamer clouds, and, *pizzicato,*
Just before dawn the sound of rain.

Forte, fortissimo, misurato!
Zoom, comes the sun up—morning again!

Conversation on the Telephone

By May Sarton

Instant communication.
This is the modern torture:
The body jerked
From its relaxed position,
Precipitated without will
Into a situation
It can perceive
With one sense only.
The tension of the ear
Open and innocent
Toward whatever voice
Leaps out
Inviting to a cocktail,
Or a sale of Chelsea—
Announcing love.
It will pounce like a hawk
Catching the mouse of anguish
As it tries to run.
It will suddenly stop,
No cry, no clamor bring it back,
No way of knowing where
In what room in what city
The disembodied creature
Has departed
Laughing or weeping.
This is the slicing off of ears
And cutting tongues,
The cruel modern severance
Of one part from another,
As it clutches a dead instrument
And is asked
"What number?"

The Family at New Place

By Kathryn Jean Mac Farlane

Caduceus to his polar brain
words were wound in holy bane.
A rooted axis turns a mind
with neither sticks
nor stones to grind.
In nowise desert bloomed this rod
lien to Prince, island to God.
What he named he made his own:
bombastic flesh or cynic bone,
gently wore the rose or thorn
Caliban and unicorn,
and Juliet weeping in the dark
forswore the gay, perfidious lark.

O regnant and vernacular
and hawked about the town,
like cabalistic ninepins
pit-bears kneel them down
and cross furry thumbs for
Player, Bard and Clown.

Reflection

By Ruth Lambert Jones

I like stupid people
They tolerate facts,
They miss points of stories
And motives for acts,
Their graces are homespun,
Their instincts are blind
I like stupid people;
They ease up the mind.

Star-Gazer

By Frances Frost

He who has stared into the gusty face
of dark, who patiently has entered heaven,
plumbing the infinite auguries of space
and seen a single star split into seven,
looks back upon the turning earth with eyes
which eat the round of stones and buds of clover;
he who has pierced the secrets of the skies
becomes the lover of the grass forever.

His spirit may companion the lovely far
glimmering river of worlds, or he may wander
along the battlefields of cosmic war,
but his heart returns to earth with mortal wonder,
and he lies at last with juniper and thorn
who has looked long on lunar matterhorns.

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Votaresses of Britannia

REGENCY. By D. L. Murray. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

STUDENTS of the Regency period tell us that it is the eighteenth century dying of fatty degeneration, but dying with an air. The goddess of Reason reigns no more: in her place is Britannia, a buxom, semi-nude lady, but still a goddess. Very soon she will be clothed, imperial, middle-class, in her right mind; in the meantime she has her votaries. Like her, they are coarse; like her, they are inclined to bully: like her, too, they have the grand manner. And when they gather in the Prince Regent's Brighton Pavilion, with its scarlet lackeys, its preposterous gilded dragons, its exquisite china, they are even a little fantastic. Mr. Murray does very well by them. In one scene he brings them all together—the belles, the wits, the rakes, a nabob or two, Lord Barrymore. The Regent—he has left his 'cello in London —consents to sing "Rule Britannia" in a rich baritone, the heroine almost swoons; and so does Mr. Murray's style. It is a big moment, and I don't blame him.

The heroine of this novel is the lady Regency Davenport, and her father made his fortune dubiously in Patulipatam, India. Regency seduces a groom, wears boy's clothes, becomes the Regent's mistress, marries Lord Marah, and has a daughter by another man: in the intervals she is very womanly, even tender, though she has a murder on her conscience. Lord Marah kills her. The novel passes on to her daughter who is successively a Puseyite nun and the wife of a childish baronet. Her daughter marries a Jewish hotel-owner, is known to Brighton as Lottie Rosenberg, and entertains Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales. And Lottie's grand-daughter. . . . But we are now in the 1930's, so Lottie's grand-daughter dies to save a friend who is mixed up in a Brighton dope-ring.

The point of all this is the persistence of the lady Regency's blood, which is courageous and speedy: except the nun, these women owe nothing to their fathers. They have Regency's blood in common and Brighton in common, and they have something else, too. They are all the votaresses of that early Britannia. They may not be coarse, but they are certainly fantastic: more fantastic than either the nineteenth or the twentieth centuries really permit. The strict may be disturbed by this, but Mr. Murray is not writing an historical novel; he is writing a semi-historical melodrama, a kind of fiction which is often much more fun to read and which occasionally leaps, in the most impulsive manner, right into the middle of a truth. Mr. Murray, for instance, tells a truth about women. It is not a subtle truth, nor is it universal—quite the opposite: it is simply that his women are constantly in motion, their motion is feminine, and it leaves you breathless. They are alive and original. They swirl about in a jumble of fact and fantasy, and the book which contains them is very readable—more readable than a dozen more delicate novels.

George Dangerfield has spent much time delving into English social history.

REGENCY SOCIETY

Play Plots

(*Continued from page* 4)

the mind and imagination of the dramatist who is telling it. Upon this second story our enjoyment of the first depends to such an extent that the two of them can be likened to the man and woman who, in what is a bold phrase for "Hiawatha," are described as being "useless each without the other."

We do not have to attend the theatre as if we were so many professors of dramaturgy to follow these two stories simultaneously. If we are really following a play as a play, and not as the literal transcription of life which it may pretend to be, we have no other choice than to note, with curiosity and for what they are worth, the "ways, methods, and devices" which a playwright has employed to give dramatic statement to his fable. In appreciating the contribution these make to the enrichment or squandering of the subject that is being dealt with, we not only put ourselves into closer touch with that subject and the dramatist who is dealing with it, but with one of the most constant sources of the theatre's fascination. For if, as playgoers, we are aware of the challenges which the theatre presents to those who undertake to write for it, we do not have to be told that where story-telling, as it is usually understood, leaves off, playwriting commences.

Underlying the play we see as if it were tracks put down by the author to carry us along with his action, his characters, and his dialogue to the best views he has discovered in the country of his choice, is the playwright's plotting of his fable. If we would enjoy the trip which a play invites us to take, we cannot help being as grateful for the condition of the roadbed, the comfort of the coaches, the window space at our disposal, and the engineer's skill in starting and stopping his train as we are interested in the place from which we leave, the company in which we find ourselves, the stops we make, the speed at which we travel, and whether we are moving forward or backwards to reach our destination.

We no longer ask for the elaborate plots and subplots which were once in favor. We no longer admire those structures, reared in the name of "well-made plays," from which the carpenters often refused to move out to let the tenants move in. And so suspicious have we become of scripts written only from "the reason" and for the sake of the tawdry "big scenes" to which they lead us, that, in the presence of such concoctions we are inclined to echo the words of the Citizen in "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" and cry "Plot me no plots."

But, simpler as our tastes in story-telling are, we cannot dismiss plotting in the same way. It has not lost its fascination. It remains the initial guarantee of an author's presence. That in itself is all-important, for it reminds us of a fact which some theatregoers ignore when they listen to plays as if the actors were always making them up as they go along, or as if plays just wrote themselves.

To enjoy a play as a play, at the same time we enjoy it for the story which it tells or for the manner in which it is being performed, means only that we admit the dramatist's presence by being neither incurious about nor unconscious of the playwriting which has gone into his script. It does not mean that we are deaf to what the play has to say, that we lessen our absorption in its human values, that we fail to respond to the persuasion of its action, that we subtract from its pleasures as entertainment, or that we prattle off dull technical terms in an

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arbitrary fashion as if we were embryonic Freytags. It merely implies that when we see a play we are as prepared to appreciate the dramatist's contribution to the story he is telling in his chosen medium as we would be to admit the importance of Leonardo's contribution as a painter to the coloring, composition, and quality of such a picture as "The Last Supper," which is quite another thing from the story that it tells.

In undertaking to appraise a play in terms of its playwriting, we need have no mystical powers of divination. We must only have sufficient sympathetic interest in what we are seeing and hearing to accompany the advance of the dramatist's action by asking ourselves a few of the questions which, by his solutions of them, the playwright confesses he has asked himself.

We must be alive to the point and value of his selections; note the mood he seeks to establish in his introductory scene; be anxious to discover why he starts his action where he does; and watch his expository devices, trusting, that if he bothers to cancel them, he will be too inventive to rely either on the telephone or the butler and maid, whose weird custom it is to dust Lady Tippleton's drawingroom together at eight o'clock in the evening just before her Ladyship is expecting dinner guests.

Without removing ourselves from what is happening we must find time to decide in passing if by happening as it does it illustrates its author's point as fully as it might. We must consider what ends are gained, other than providing a star with a stellar entrance, by withholding the leading character for too long a time, or by introducing him at once. We must be ready to take what warnings the dramatist is giving us, notice the means he uses to create and maintain suspense, be grateful for the donations made by separate scenes and acts, and match the impolite prompting of our "sense of theatre" with the playwright's demonstration of his own. We must observe not only how he employs his characters but deploys them, how he distributes his action and expands it, and sense the wisdom or the lack of wisdom of his choices. We must have some consciousness of his design, for it is an integral part of his style, and be genuinely eager to know how it proclaims itself to be the work of his hand.

In short, we must have some desire to shadow the playwright whose play we are following even while we follow his play. If he be a dramatist worthy of the name, or of the time occupied by the enacting of his script, we have no other choice than to follow him contentedly at a respectful distance through the structure he has built. It is only when he allows us to catch up with him, or, worse still, when we discover he is trailing us without shame that we lose all interest in him and his work. It is not for us to say what kind of edifice he may rear, or to dictate the architectural form he may give to the plotting which he offers as a domicile to the characters, action, dialogue, flavor, and idea of his play. Our only right is to insist that it be interesting; that in building it he consider the needs of the people who are to live in it; that he provide it with stout enough walls so that when once his characters have taken possession of it they need not worry about their safety and may feel at liberty to speak the truth as they know it; that he see to it that, whether it shows or is hidden, the wiring be connected; and that he endow his edifice with enough windows to let in the sun and the moon and the air, or, if he omits the windows, that he at least instal some ventilation system of his own devising, provide his own illumination, and engage singers to sing the sweetest of songs, clowns to cut the maddest of capers, or waiters to serve the best of champagne.

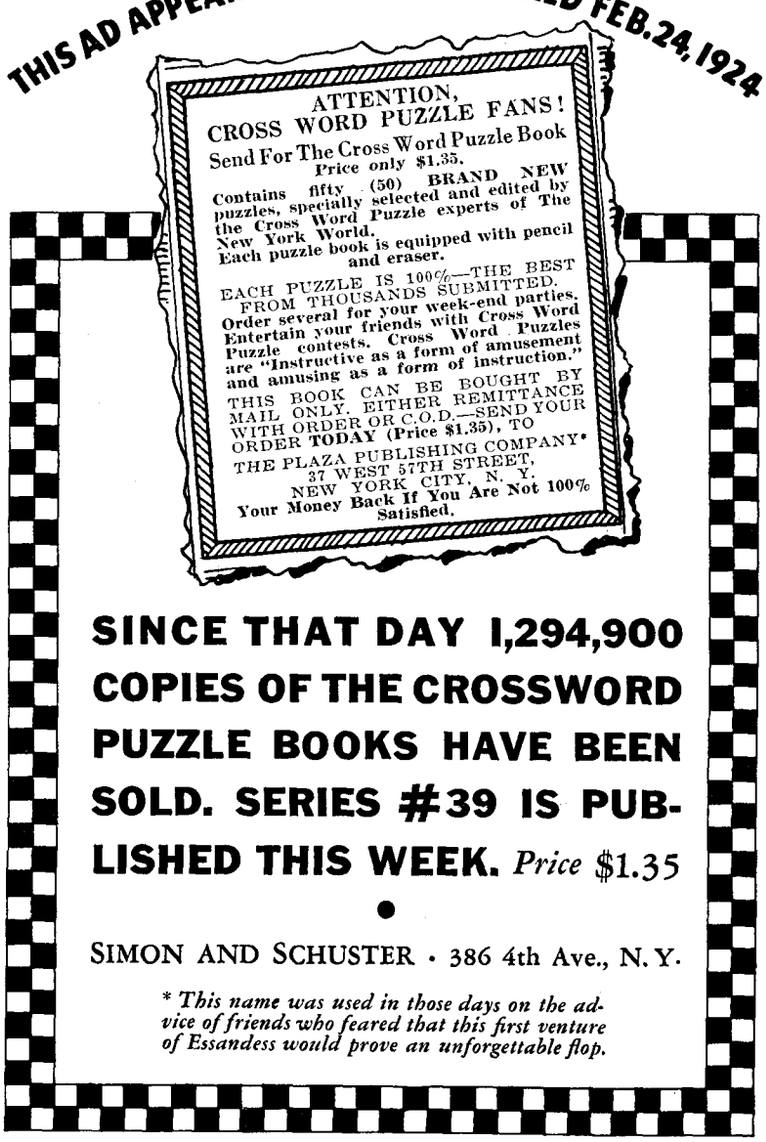
John Mason Brown is dramatic critic of The New York Post. *The foregoing essay is to constitute a chapter of his "Art of Playgoing," shortly to be published by W. W. Norton & Co.*

Samples of Dickens

DICKENS, THE MAN AND THE BOOK. By Ralph Straus. New York: Nelson & Co. 1936.

Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON

LARGELY quotations, specimens of Dickens, with commentaries. The commentaries are not notable in themselves, and yet the book is notable, in a sense, for this reason: it amounts to a sort of biography in terms of Dickens the writer. The outline of his life is given passingly but the story is mainly the story of his authorship by samples, and it makes a very readable story. Mr. Straus makes some interesting suggestions, for instance, that Dickens's childhood was perhaps not as wretched as he represented it, very much as John Dickens, his father, was not quite so peculiar as Mr. Micawber. His sufferings in the blacking warehouse were those of an abnormally sensitive and imaginative child rather than because the warehouse was abnormally dreadful.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Europe in the Middle Ages

THE CAMBRIDGE MEDIEVAL HISTORY. Planned by J. B. Bury, Edited by C. W. Previté-Orton, and Z. N. Brooke. Volume VIII: THE CLOSE OF THE MIDDLE AGES. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1936.

Reviewed by JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON

WITH the appearance of the eighth volume of the Cambridge Medieval History this scholarly enterprise, which has been twenty-five years in the making, is terminated. In the meantime, the architect of this monumental structure, the late Professor J. B. Bury, and five of the associate editors have died and been succeeded by new editors. Yet the direction of the work has proceeded unimpaired and the consistency of the scholarship has been preserved. The only cessation of the undertaking was during the four years of the World War, which was especially calamitous to the quality of the third volume, because all the the contributions by German historical scholars which had been previously arranged for were then cancelled, and with one exception the substitute contributors for the chapters on the history of medieval Germany were not competent for the task.

This volume differs from each of the previous volumes of the series in being without an introduction, which is to be regretted. For these successive introductions are admirable interpretative syntheses of the period concerned, often more suggestive and certainly more readable than most of the chapters which follow. In compensation, however, for the absence of an introduction to this volume, we find an epilogue written by Professor Previté-Orton which exhibits that breadth of view and depth of penetration and brilliance of generalization which we have learned to expect from him. No one who has read it will forget his wonderful introduction to the sixth volume, in which he characterized the history of the thirteenth century. Given its compass—it fills less than ten pages—nothing as luminous upon the nature and quality of medieval history when its culture was at its height has been written in English since Bishop Stubb's two wonderful essays on the characteristic differences between medieval and modern history.

The preface, which is signed by the two editors, confesses to "a sigh of relief that they sign their initials for the last time," thanks each and all contributors, and then disarms the prospective critic by admitting that there are "certain objections to coöperative histories." Some of these objections have been voiced with the appearance of every volume of the series; but apparently the objections have been expressed in vain; for the same defects have recurred as volume has succeeded volume. Some of the signal objections have been the mechanical nature of the bibliographies, which in only a few instances seem to have been prepared by the author of the chapter concerned; the inconsistency in distinguishing various kinds of sources; the divorce between the text and the bibliographies; the absence of references, which makes it impossible to control the accuracy of the contributors; the scant notice taken of periodical literature among authors and titles cited; and sometimes curious discrepancies which the editors have failed to perceive. For example, in volume VII the late Professor Blok repeated the ancient tale that William Tell was the champion of Swiss liberty, whereas Professor Paul E. Martin, himself a Swiss, wrote the whole chapter dealing with the formation of the Swiss Confederation without so much as mentioning Tell, who actually has no more historicity than the hero of Rossini's opera.

More substantial defects which characterize this series as a whole are the excessive amount of political, administrative, and military history to the prejudice of the history of economic and social changes. Such treatment as is found of these subjects is episodic, as in the chapters in volume VI, in which Professor Clapham deals with "Commerce and Industry in the Middle Ages," and the late Professor Pirenne writes of "Northern Towns and Their Commerce." As for the higher culture of Europe in the Middle Ages, as distinguished from its material culture, except for medieval education, the subject is given short shrift.

The late Montagu Rhodes James contributed two luminous chapters to volume III on "Learning and Literature till the Death of Bede," and "Learning and Literature till Pope Sylvester II." But nothing similar is to be found in any subsequent volume. The whole subject of Latin literature from 1000 A.D. to 1500 A.D. is omitted. As for the rich and varied store of medieval literature in the vernacular languages, it has all been ignored except for the late Jessie Weston's single chapter on "Legendary Cycles of the Middle Ages." One turns the pages and searches the indices in vain for information on the chansons de geste, jongleurs, and troubadours, the Goliards, fabliaux, bestiaries, sermons, and exempla, lives of the saints, etc. As to the medieval drama, all that the reader will learn from an attentive examination of these tomes will be found in volume VII, where he is told that "the influence of the little book entitled 'Meditations on the Life of Christ,' long attributed to St. Bonaventura, not only on the literature, but on the sacred art and drama of the later Middle Ages, was enormous," and further that "many scholars find in Jacopone's *lauda* 'Donna del Paradiso' the origin of the Italian religious drama." Brevity is sometimes the soul of wit, and sometimes the product of ignorance.

The criterion of civilization is utility. The criterion of culture is consciousness. In the history of the higher culture of Europe, except, as said, in education and philosophy, the "Cambridge Medieval History" has many and grave omissions. In this concluding volume of the series, some amend is made for one important omission in previous volumes by Professor Thorndike's chapter on "Magic, Witchcraft, Astrology and Alchemy." But its insertion here deranges the time-sequence, for the chapter begins with early Christianity and magic, and sixteen pages deal with the history of these matters before the thirteenth century; only ten are pertinent to the period with which this volume deals. Medieval science as distinguished from pseudo-science, is relegated to a few pages in Volume V, the chapter which is entitled "Philosophy in the Middle Ages," that is to say Realism and Nominalism. Aristotelianism, Averroism, and Scholasticism are com-

SCENES REPRESENTING LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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bined in a single treatment, so that medieval science is lost in the shuffle.

Returning now from this digression into previous volumes of this series to the volume immediately under consideration, it may be said that all the chapters have been written by competent contributors. There are a number of old familiar names, as Altamira Calmette and Petit Dutaillis; others are new contributors, as Professor Krofta of the University of Prague who has written upon John Hus and Bohemia in the fifteenth century, and Dr. Bálint Hóman, who is Royal Hungarian Minister for Worship and Public Education, and has furnished an admirable chapter on the history of Hungary from 1301 to 1490. The pages upon the institutions, economic conditions, and social structure among the Magyars after Hungary became a Western State are very informing. The chapter on political theory in the later Middle Ages by Professor Laski and that by that veteran scholar, Professor Arthur Tilley, upon the Renaissance and Humanism, are marvels of condensed and refined information. Three chapters are from the pens of three distinguished scholars recently deceased—Edward Armstrong's on "The Papacy and Naples in the Fifteenth Century," Paul Fournier's on "The Kingdom of Arles from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," and that on "The Low Countries," by Henri Pirenne. Professor Halvdan Koht of the University of Oslo, who has lately added the title of Minister of Foreign Affairs in Norway to his academic insignia, contributes the chapter on "The Scandinavian Kingdoms during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries." The two chapters on the history of Portugal and of Poland-Lithuania have been written by British scholars.

One last observation: Linear measurement, perhaps, is an unjust criterion by which to estimate the value of a great compendious work. But such data at least may shed some light upon the extent of the treatment of various subjects. Taking the names "England," "France," "Germany" (including the Empire), and "Italy" as found in the indices to volumes five to eight inclusive, it leaps to the eyes that the Cambridge Medieval History is primarily intended for English and American readers.

James Westfall Thompson is professor of European history at the University of California.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 127)

EDMUND BURKE—
"FRENCH REVOLUTION."

Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink . . . pray do not imagine . . . that . . . they are other than the little shriveled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour.

American Entry for All-Nations Prize

STEPS GOING DOWN. By John T. McIntyre. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

SINCE this is open season for the hunting of prize winners, Mr. McIntyre's book comes up for review under a terrible handicap. It was chosen from among more than five hundred manuscripts as the American contender in an All-Nations Prize Novel Competition, sponsored by the publishers, the Literary Guild, Warner Brothers, and publishers in eleven foreign countries. Whatever the others were looking for, it is clear that Warner Brothers have got something they can use. "Steps Going Down" is a slick and facile job of writing by a practised hand, centered about a hard, smooth, fast-thinking two-fister called Pete who is cut out after one of Dashiell Hammett's best patterns. The plot moves on wheels. One incident crowds another and blacks out at the high point, as Pete moves confidently through tense situations, knocks down enemies, evades the cops, fascinates the girls, and never has an emotion deeper than surprise. It is, in fact, a great role for James Cagney, if the Brothers can get him for it.

But what is the use of adorning this expert and entertaining scenario with ill-fitting literary laurels and sending it out as an American Prize Novel? And how will the three eminent judges look, in about six months, when somebody shows them what they said on the back of the jacket? For all of Mr. McIntyre's prolific gallery of tough downtown characters and colorful wastrels, his fertile invention of incident, and his easy flow of hard-boiled dialogue, the story and its people are empty of what we know to be life.

There used to flourish a romantic type of fiction in which everybody swooned with excess of feeling. This kind of story, in which people seem to feel nothing, in which all the emotions are mentioned but none experienced, is equally romantic, equally false. The modern legend, stimulated and developed by the screen, is of a stoic, nerveless hero in a simple, behaviorist world, and our only objection to it can be that nothing we think about, nothing that happens in our own world, appears there. Of this legend "Steps Going Down" is a shining example and Pete is its prophet. Mr. McIntyre's position seems assured, and we would ask him only to remove one distracting blemish from his otherwise contemporary vocabulary: we should derive much satisfaction from knowing that he had left off the use of the word "bust" as descriptive of female anatomy.

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MACMILLAN

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Backdrop for a Troubled Stage

SOMEWHERE TO THE SEA. By Kenneth Reddin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by MARY MANNING

I REMEMBER as a child bathing at Seapoint, where all the nice little suburban children bathed, swimming out beyond the rocks, turning suddenly to look towards Dublin, and seeing the city more or less in flames. I felt very little surprise, only the mildest stirring of excitement, for it was the year Nineteen Twenty-two. The Irish Civil War was in full progress and for the second time in six years O'Connell Street was on fire. I could never feel much surprise again, having been brought up in troubled times and since my seventh year having been conscious of little else but wars and rumors of wars. And then I heard our nurse screaming at us from the shore to come in outer that or no jam for tea. Her remarks were punctuated by distant gunfire, but her concern I learnt on reaching the shore was not inspired by sounds of warfare but rather that we might stay in too long and get cramps! And sure enough all the other nannies and governesses and mammas did not seem to be unduly alarmed but went on knitting and gossiping and keeping an eye on their charges. Trains were puffing in and out of the incredibly dirty little station; in fact all up and down the coast, from Howth to Wicklow Head, people like us were enjoying a fine afternoon by the sea while Dublin roared up in flames and brother waged war on brother. We were that happy medium, the middle class Irish. You very rarely hear of us, for if we are to go by the recent films Dublin is a city plunged in perpetual fog with here and there a street lamp and one "jaunting car" and populated solely by hatchety-faced revolutionaries, Black-and-Tans, and prostitutes.

"Somewhere to the Sea" is the first novel to chronicle the lives and doings of the ordinary citizens of Dublin during those troubled years. And there have been so many novels of the Troubles; some of them very good, more of them very bad, but good or bad they deal with one aspect only—the Revolution and those taking an active part in it. None of them, up to this, have realized the existence of a great solid mass of quiet people who went on living and eating and laughing and sleeping or trying to sleep, during those years. It was often exciting, it was occasionally dangerous, but it was great fun, or "great gas," as the Dubliners say, and it is this life which Kenneth Reddin has described with so much humor and sympathy in "Somewhere to the Sea."

The hero, Neil Coburn (largely autobiographical), is a young lawyer who behind the respectable façade of his ordinary office work is administering justice in the illegal Sinn Fein courts. He is a revolutionary, but not, as he discovers, a militant revolutionary. He writes a play which is to be produced at the Abbey and he falls in love with a strange, difficult young woman who is always taking offence. He is arrested for his Sinn Fein activities, serves a term at Kilmainham, comes out, marries and, one gathers, settles down in an old house at Rathfarnham. There is a subsidiary plot which matters very little and a host of minor characters who matter a great deal.

It is the book of an ordinary man with a poet's reactions to the ordinary things around him. Mr. Reddin can write beautifully of the country; on the other hand his dialogue is stilted and somewhat self-conscious and the principal characters, especially the women, colorless and unreal. Even the hero, Neil Coburn, never really comes alive. But in the painting of crowds, or when describing the general atmosphere of the city he comes into his own.

"Somewhere to the Sea" is lifted above the ordinary run of semi-autobiographical novels by its humor and kindliness and an attractive quality of innocent honesty. Naive in parts and often sentimental, it yet brings an entirely fresh outlook to the Irish scene. It is always readable, and thanks be to the Saints it is a refreshing change.

People Like Us

MR. AND MRS. NORTH. By Richard Lockridge. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1936. $2.

MR. LOCKBRIDGE, the theatrical critic, subtitles this book of sketches from *The New Yorker* "A Novel." At that, they form a pretty complete life of the Norths. To the serious-minded the Norths might appear trivial, but they are really quite like most middle-class married people of decent disposition. Mr. Lockridge views them with quiet appreciation. Their lives are full of delightful eccentricities. The small episodes that make for Mr. North's constant bewilderment and amazement, the impressions and exploits of the charming Mrs. North that contribute to these feelings on her husband's part, confront us with a mirror of ourselves in our more feeble yet still courageous moments. Mr. North in the hands of his lawyers or with a sudden hankering after "a meaty taste"; Mrs. North's aplomb in her adventures with the car, the husband's many ordeals and embarrassments, such as loitering in Central Park, buying perfume, charging a purchase, being neutral in a conversation, thinking of elephants, smiling at strangers at the theatre, realizing that the ace had been led, not at first recognizing Burton, waiting for his sister-in-law to come in quietly, and so on—not to mention the wife's grand slam in the matter of the portrait in the dull gold frame—these are only a few of the things to be relished in this entirely unpretentious and wholly human volume.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE CASE OF THE CONSTANT GOD *Rufus King* (Crime Club: $2.)	Blackmailer with religious mania, and decayed actor murdered—one by land and one by sea. Lieut. Valcour is not daunted.	The thrills and polished deducing are there in quantity—also the uncomfortable feeling that the whole thing is a phony.	Waxwork
BEHOLD, HERE'S POISON! *Georgette Heyer* (Crime Club: $2.)	Elderly and obnoxious brother and sister mysteriously envenomed, leaving all heirs suspect and a pretty dish for Insp. Hannasyde.	Randall Matthews, "amiable snake," dominates entire dazzling yarn, which is marvelous mélange of malice, murder, mystery, and mirth.	Priceless!
THE WHEEL SPINS *Ethel Lina White* (Harpers: $2.)	Sudden and unbelievable disappearance of English spinster on trans-European express drives girl hunting her (also reader) almost mad.	Intrigue, mystery, near-violence, smart humor, dash of romance, and a De'il's plenty of refined but spine-chilling horror.	Hard to beat
THE CASE OF THE MISSING CORPSE *Joan Sanger* (Green Circle: $2.)	Rich young sportsman vanishes in Havana. Peter Alcott and reporter pal trail the "corpse" through varied adventures.	Considerable shooting and assorted rough stuff in N. Y. and Cuba—but, oh, what a letdown at the end!	Average

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The New Books

Biography

PEOPLE, PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. By R. H. (Bob) Davis. Stokes. 1936. $3.

A big book of juicy anecdotes from all parts of the world, of good stories from Nova Scotia to Yucatan. The material in this volume appeared originally in the New York *Sun*, on the editorial page, under the title "Bob Davis Reveals." Adventures with famous people, in famous places—and also with extraordinary people who have hidden themselves away in odd corners of the world. There are some good things said about food, too—about the right way to cook a salmon, and about the horrible white sauce of old England. Bullfighters, sculptors, a clown, an alley cat, a hunter of big game, Haiti's Negro king; Edinburgh and South Africa, Mexico City and New Orleans—all is grist that comes to the journalistic mill of Bob Davis. This famous American editor writes in a racy, breezy way, in an utterly American idiom, with a love for the peculiarities of people and a joy in wandering the world. The Tired Business Man, of great fame, could certainly pick up this volume, open it at any page, and immediately become less tired. The joy of life is in it, and you are personally conducted by a genial but astute cicerone, not only through the capitals of Europe, but to such out-of-the-way places as the Capital of Content, Peggys Cove, Nova Scotia. You meet both Bernard Shaw and John L. Sullivan. And Mr. Davis throws in for good measure his own photographs of places and people to illustrate the text. "Bob" knows how to spin a yarn, and he's been all over the world and met all sorts and conditions of men and women. From Dorothy Dix to Mahatma Ghandi, from Gordon Selfridge to Hamilton Gibbs. This may not be literature but it is full of life, and bang-up good journalism. A companionable book for a quiet evening.

W. R. B.

Fiction

LONG JOHN MURRAY. By W. A. S. Douglas. Coward-McCann. 1936. $2.

Long John Murray, a gigantic, brutal, and lecherous Scot, is a chum of "dirty Jamie," the Sixth of Scotland and the First of England. After Jamie, by the grace of God and other accidents, has become King of England, Long John accomplishes a forced marriage with the daughter of an O'Hagan and a sea captain who had been stranded on the coast of Antrim in the wreck of the Spanish Armada, thereby begetting a long line of lusty, lustful Murrays and an unquenchable feud between the Murrays and the Santells, as the descendants of the Spanish sea captain came to be called. From this auspicious beginning Mr. Douglas skips to the last years of the nineteenth century and tells the story of the last Long John Murray, his numerous progeny, legitimate and otherwise, and the last of the Santells, leading us through various events in Ireland, the Boer War, and the World War.

One finishes the book with a feeling of regret that it is not much better than it is. Mr. Douglas understands Ulster and writes of it with something of the nostalgic love with which his friend Donn Byrne wrote of it in "The Wind Bloweth." The early part of the book encouraged the hope that he would deal illuminatingly with the enigma of Ulster, which few outsiders understand and which is so difficult to explain to outsiders. At times he touches closely this pregnant theme, as in the suggestive description of an Orange demonstration at the funeral of one of the Murrays. But for the most part he merely skirts it. On the whole the construction of the book is awkward and the mood confused. The characters have the outward vitality but inner lifelessness of the stock figures of historical romance. There are frequent banalities in the writing.

D. D.

STRANGE MELODY. By Neil Bell. Doubleday, Doran. 1936. $2.50.

If you like to read about writers, their struggles, their defeats, their successes, you will like this detailed biographical novel about a prolific English author, whose struggles and defeats and successes ran overwhelmingly from one end of the keyboard to the other to make that strange melody of his life.

If you don't like to read about writers, you will like John MacDermott for himself, a virile, raffish, gay, lying, yet sensitively human story-teller, whose passion for spending money became a near mania.

You will like him best before his success has come, when his stories won't sell; when his young wife dies, leaving him with a small daughter, a courageous little pardner; when he rips out a 90,000-word novel in two weeks, which no publisher would buy; when, dauntless, he publishes it himself, peddles it, ludicrously, by bicycle, to the coast book shops, and sells—only sixteen books! But finally, shopworn and bedraggled, the book and its writer are swept to a fantastic success.

"Strange Melody" is a rambling, reminiscent sort of novel, told, with few high spots, in the first person by MacDermott's daughter. Which works both for and against its merit: it gives a feeling that the man really lived, yet it clogs up the story with author's "asides" and minor incidents. One becomes annoyed at the frequent parentheses, which are so often over-used in first person English novels. Neil Bell might profit by a more selected choice of incidents. For instance, the average reader, for whom this book is obviously intended, will want to skip over such passages as the sight-seeing tours in Petticoat Lane and the Wapping of 1905 London, vivid though it is, to know more about John MacDermott. He is the soul of the book, a grand, spectacular person. You'll like him.

G. N.

(*Continued on next page*)

The N. Y. TIMES says:

"Nothing in either George Orwell's DOWN AND OUT IN PARIS AND LONDON or BURMESE DAYS could have led one to anticipate so big a jump in quality as is represented by

THE CLERGYMAN'S DAUGHTER
by GEORGE ORWELL

"It is not bitter but it is definitely satirical; and satire comes naturally to this novelist's hand. He shows the satirist's most delicate and deadly weapon—ridicule."

$2. HARPERS

From Germany Uncensored!

A TRUE narrative of the ruthless struggle *even now* going on in Germany between the Nazis and the Socialists and Communists, with many sensational revelations. $2 at all bookstores. (LIPPINCOTT)

FIRES UNDERGROUND
By HEINZ LIEPMANN

$2500 PRIZE NOVELETTE CONTEST

Little, Brown & Company will pay the sum of $2500 as an advance on account of royalties, for the book rights alone, for the most interesting unpublished work of fiction, between 15,000 and 35,000 words in length, submitted before January 1, 1937. The publishers hope that several manuscripts in addition to the winner will merit publication on a royalty basis.

For full particulars write Novelette Prize Contest, Little, Brown & Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston.

NOW IS THE TIME TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE—AT THE BEGINNING OF WHAT PROMISES TO BE AN UNUSUALLY INTERESTING PUBLISHING SEASON. SPECIAL RATE: THREE MONTHS (13 ISSUES) FOR $1.00. REGULAR RATE; THE YEAR (52 ISSUES) FOR $3.50. SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., THE SRL, 25 WEST 45th STREET, NEW YORK CITY.

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The Clearing House

CONDUCTED BY AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION FOR A WEEK'S READING

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS. By Thomas Mann. *Knopf.*

NIJINSKY. By Romola Nijinsky. *Simon & Schuster.*

TECHNICS AND CIVILIZATION. By Lewis Mumford. *Harcourt, Brace.*

Mrs. W. C. F. of Kewanee, Ill., *and* Mrs. H. W. F. of Gladbrook, Ia., *are both engaged in the preparation of a club program for the ensuing year. The former has the comprehensive subject of recent literature, the latter the narrower one of recent biography. I take it that by "recent" both mean the year 1936, and I am therefore making some suggestions of books published during the past eight months from which I hope they can draw assistance.*

ONE of the latest biographies of piquant character to appear is Dr. Victor Heiser's AN AMERICAN DOCTOR'S ODYSSEY (Norton). Dr. Heiser, who is an expert in tropical diseases and has made some sixteen trips around the world in behalf of the Rockefeller Institute, has taken adventure with a frolic welcome wherever he met it and his book is packed full of incidents and anecdotes of liveliest sort. It makes excellent reading, and has the added advantage of being a chronicle rich in the experience that is of value to science. Lively reading, too, though the life it mirrors is as far removed from such a career as Dr. Heiser's as North Pole is from South is THE COUNTESS FROM IOWA (Putnams), by Countess Nostitz, an autobiography which carries its subject from a childhood in the Middle West and the Sierras to a life spent first among the splendors and diversions of court society in Czarist Russia and later in the turmoil of Revolution. Mrs. H. W. F., by right of residence, ought to be particularly interested in this book. A penetrating study of personality, set against a foreign background, is to be found in Pearl Buck's charming little volume entitled EXILE (Day), which is a portrayal of her mother, and incidentally, of her father, while an interesting revelation of the literary mind at work and off guard is presented in G. B. Stern's MONOGRAM (Macmillan). If either club program maker wants a book on current political personalities she can choose either Konrad Heiden's HITLER (Knopf) or George Seldes's SAWDUST CAESAR (Harpers), the latter the untold story of Mussolini and fascism. And if she wishes older historical figures there are Edith Sitwell's VICTORIA OF ENGLAND (Houghton Mifflin)—and it would be interesting to read in connection with this Elswyth Thane's novel, THE YOUNG DISRAELI (Harcourt, Brace)—and, for American subjects, the studies of Thomas Jefferson by James Truslow Adams (Scribners) and Claude Bowers (Houghton Mifflin).

There is considerable in fiction that trenches on biography and history and might meet the needs at any rate of Mrs. W. C. F. Into this category fall Feuchtwanger's THE JEW OF ROME (Viking), which takes Josephus for hero; Olive B. White's interesting tale about THE KING'S GOOD SERVANT (Macmillan), built the dramatic climax of Sir Thomas More's life; Vincent Sheean's SANFELICE (Doubleday, Doran), in which the Neapolitan court, Nelson, and Lady Emma Hamilton play a part and revolution serves as background for the action; Sylvia Townsend Warner's SUMMER WILL SHOW (Viking) with revolution again, but this time in Paris, making the accompaniment to the experiences of the heroine; Walter E. Edmonds's DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK (Little, Brown), yet another revolutionary story, though in this instance the scene is laid in America, and Margaret Mitchell's sensationally successful tale of the Civil War and the carpet bag regime in Georgia, GONE WITH THE WIND (Macmillan). Miss Mitchell's novel is running away with all recent records for popularity, and is deserving of the favor it is receiving. In no sense of the word a great book, it is an excellent one, vivid, faithful to fact, and conveying more vigorously than any other work I recall the gathering of the war in the South, the divided opinions that preceded it, the heroic determination that supported it, and the tragic devastation that accompanied and followed it. For all that its two principal male characters come dangerously close to the heroes of melodrama, and that some of its incidents are tarred with the same stick, the story it tells is enthralling, and its heroine veracious and striking. A later than the Civil War forms the background, indeed, more than the backround, for Arnold Zweig's EDUCATION BEFORE VERDUN (Viking), in which the author carries on with one of the characters of SERGEANT GRISCHA, and as in that book conveys most vividly the reaction of a generous mind to the experience of the World War.

1936 has so far produced no novel by an established author that outranks his earlier performances with the possible exception of John Dos Passos's THE BIG MONEY (Harcourt, Brace). Here Mr. Dos Passos continues the manner, and spirit of *1919*, but shows a ripening and broadening of his art. John Gould Cozzens, again in his latest book, MEN AND BRETHREN (Harcourt, Brace) gives evidence of a genuine ability and one which has many strings to its bow. Aldous Huxley's EYELESS IN GAZA (Harpers), which, like all Mr. Huxley's books, rivets attention by the brilliance of the mind inspiring it even if it rarely touches the emotions, Marguerite Steen's THE TAVERN (Bobbs-Merrill) whose Spanish background ought today to have special interest. Rosamond Lehmann's THE WEATHER IN STREETS (Reynal & Hitchcock)—a grand title that book has if ever there was one!—André Malraux's DAYS OF WRATH (Random House), Cora Jarrett's STRANGE HOUSES (Farrar & Rinehart), a psychological horror story, Jules Romain's THE EARTH TREMBLES (Knopf), which constitutes the fifth volume of MEN OF GOOD WILL, and Nora Holtby's SOUTH RIDING (Macmillan) all are novels which it would be eminently worth the while of the clubs which Mrs. W. C. F. and Mrs. H. W. F. represent to investigate.

And if the clubs want to go adventuring into other fields there are a number of miscellaneous volumes all well worth their attention—in science, THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS (Reynal & Hitchcock), by C. C. Furnas, and Donald Culross Peattie's GREEN LAURELS (Simon & Schuster), a biography of Audubon (of whom an excellent life, by Constance Rourke, will shortly be published by Harcourt, Brace); in international affairs, Marquis Child's SWEDEN: THE MIDDLE WAY (Yale University Press), INSIDE EUROPE (Harpers), by John Gunther, THE WAY OF A TRANSGRESSOR (Harcourt, Brace), by Negley Farson; FINLAND (Viking), by Agnes Rothery, and MEXICAN INTERLUDE (Macmillan), by Joseph Henry Jackson.

The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Miscellaneous

FACTS AND FRAUDS IN WOMAN'S HYGIENE. By Rachel Lynne Palmer and Sarah K. Greenberg, M.D. Vanguard. 1936. $2.

The gullibility of the American people is no doubt an indication of its youth and therefore probably forgivable. In politics and in chewing-gum it may not matter much one way or another. We can even listen indifferently to what seems to be the same radio voice claiming fantastic powers for competitive brands, but when advertisers are permitted to exploit the "mysteries" and ills, either real or imagined, of men and women, it becomes a matter for more than passing irritation.

Women, both because of the ages-old prudishness which still surrounds their sexual functions, and because beauty and charm are supposedly their main weapons of defense, offer the happiest of all hunting-grounds to the patent and proprietary medicine men. In spite of admirable efforts in recent years through books, lectures, and articles, it is doubtful if one woman in a hundred has any intelligent conception of the working of her own body, or one in a thousand of the hidden dangers in every-day antiseptic products and the countless reducing nostrums. The more intelligent may have accepted the nonsense of Lydia Pinkham's claims, but relatively few believe even their doctors when they are told of the futility of yeast for their pimples and expensive creams for their wrinkles.

In this book the authors have squarely attacked both women's ignorance and their exploitation without exaggeration and without squeamishness. Thoroughly

(*Continued on next page*)

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Trade Winds

SPLIT SECOND EXPOSURE

BY LOUIS GREENFIELD

BIG-TOWN LOW-DOWN: The Broadway hard guys have gone literati for the season. The culture staff now being quoted a six to five favorite over swing stuff. Among the literary gents cashing in on the trend are Hervey Allen for his *Anthony Adverse* and Messers Paramount Company for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The chatter that is making the rounds around the Rialto, Algonquin, Union Square, and Columbus Circle is that a cinema baby is now scripting Bill's sonnets for an early presentation. Sinclair Lewis again will hit the playboards in both movie and stage. *Dodsworth* in the celluloid; *It Can't Happen Here* for the stage. The latter production has been taken under the wing of the Federal Theatre Projects with the opening due sometime in October. The opening of this production will be unique for its premier will appear in a number of cities simultaneously. With Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* still paying the rent for book peddlers plus the sixty-five grand that Hollywood shelled out for its movie rights authors are anticipating big business through their wares this Fall. And there is every indication that such anticipation may be realized.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *North to the Orient* (and still peddling at a rapid clip) must have started something or other for on the Fall list of book publishers we find wives of two famous gents due with a couple of tomes. One of them is *Skyways to a Jungle Laboratory*, by Grace Crile, wife of Dr. George Crile, the famous American surgeon. The other one is *For Dear Life*, by Belinda Jeliffe, wife of Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe, a New York psychiatrist. Both are autobiographical and interesting. The Morrow women authors must have been chosen from a front line Follies show or from the *Folies d'Amour* now playing the French Casino. Iris Morley, Martha Gellhorn, Jeanette Eaton, Sybil Bolitho are beautiful women—unless some air-brush artist did a bit of retouching—as well as brainy. All are represented this season. Other women on their list are Janet Smalley, who's gone and knocked out a slim volume on fishes —*Do You Know About Fishes?* Said writer also knows plums for she has also written *Plum to Plum Jam*. Joyce Cary crashes through with *The African Witch* while Iris Wedgwood, on Sept. 23, will have a nifty $5 job published—*Fenland Rivers: Impressions of the Fen Counties*. Morrow has fallen for the ladies.

But for the gents who like their reading with plenty of tobasco sauce *Hitler over Russia*, by Ernest Henri, and the new one volume edition of Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution* will satisfy that yen. Both are Simon & Schuster jobs. Music lovers are due for a most pleasant season of quality music reading. The Knopf outfit will shortly publish two books on said subject. The first to appear will be J. W. N. Sullivan's *Beethoven — His Spiritual Development* and later comes *A Short History of Music*, by Alfred Einstein. Alfred, not Albert. Viking Press will do a bit of publishing on music. *Rolling Along in Song*, edited and arranged by J. Rosamond Johnson, is due in the bookshops in October. But wait, here is more music dope. W. W. Norton will publish three musical tomes with the first coming out in October—*The Story of the Orchestra*, by Paul Bekker, and *Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, by Gustave Reese due in November. The other one is *The Children's Music Book*, by Olga Samaroff Stokowski.

The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

sound, with no wasted words, it is written in terms any woman should be able to understand. It contains many practical suggestions for what the advertisers modestly term "feminine" or "marital hygiene," and dozens of familiar advertised products are ruthlessly exposed. One would like to place it in the hands of every woman in the country, but at the same time one wonders how many women, who have saved two dollars from the housekeeping money for a permanent, could be induced to surrender it for this excellent book. Not many, perhaps, but more we are sure than would have done so ten years ago.

M. S. U., M.D.

TWENTIETH CENTURY PSYCHIATRY. By William A. White, M.D. Norton. 1936. $2.

Dr. White has as his main interest in his "Introduction" the functional approach to psychiatry, but he has a less grudging awareness of the organic background than most psychiatrists. Body and mind are a single unity like root and flower. The inclusion of such approach shows a broad view. But the neologisms of modern psychiatry are at times provoking. Man indeed lives not by bread alone but as a subject to the power of catchwords, and many try to control great new words for old disorders: organ inferiority, super-ego, id — formerly known to simple folk as constitutional predisposition, conscience, and the never-never land of dark passions and instincts. Dr. White's lectures are happily clear and wise with little furtive innuendo.

He sees the need for accepting heredity and environment as related factors in the psychoses; for exploring the very special in the "organism-as-a-whole"; for emphasis on the social significance of psychiatry; for stimulation of new studies in hypnosis; for wiping out the cruel, stupid, unwieldy, and ancient legal red-tape prior to hospitalization, and the stigma which subsequent institutionali-

(*Continued on next page*)

The AMEN CORNER

When *The Portrait of a Scholar*[1] was published, *Country Life* reviewed it and praised it. But, it said, admirable though it be, Dr. Chapman does not write so well as Miss Constance Holme—or words to that effect. Now the Publisher of *The Portrait of a Scholar* profoundly admired this book, and though an omnivorous reader had not met Miss Constance Holme's works. He bought with some difficulty *The Lonely Plough*,[2] read it and fell for it completely. He read more of her books and then went to various of his fellow publishers and urged them to bring out her works in a cheap and uniform edition. But they one and all made excuses. So he thought of the *World's Classics*,[3] and then he started to reprint her with a success that is now well known.[3]

* * *

The Portrait of a Scholar was published in 1920. Dr. Chapman wrote these essays (which one can only describe as exquisite) during his soldiering in Salonika and the little book goes on selling year in year out not only in England but also in America. Dr. Chapman is the Secretary to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press and an authority on the 18th century and Jane Austen. He is the editor of *The Novels of Jane Austen*[4] and *The Letters of Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra and Others*.[5]

* * *

Some interesting letters have been received on the subject of Constance Holme. An American publisher even protested that the *World's Classics* should include a writer of whom he had never heard. He had the grace to add that he never read her!

THE OXONIAN.

(1) $2.00 (2) 80c each. Write for complete list of over 400 titles. Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Avenue. (3) Write for circular. "The Eight Holme Novels" in the *World Classics* series. (4) 5 vols., or in 2 vols. on India paper, $10.00. (5) $5.00.

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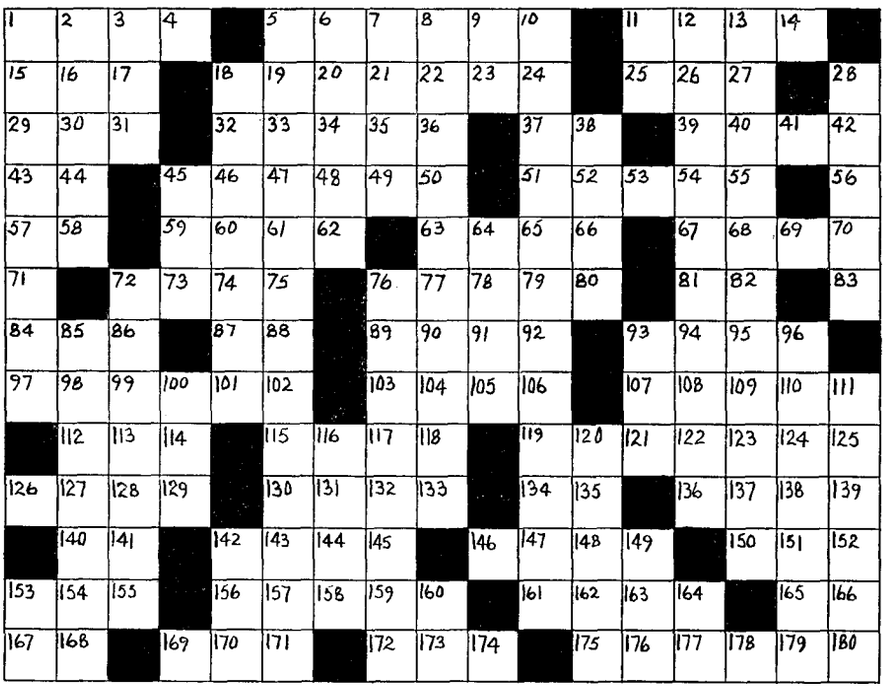
Double-Crostics: No. 128

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-seven words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 17 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

I. Trumpeter.

II. Left out of reach (3 words).

III. Exclamation of pain.

IV. Constitutional Compact (1620).

V. Pertaining to an ancient Greek.

VI. Character in "School for Scandal."

VII. A lockup (slang).

VIII. Drama by Goethe.

IX. Author of "Heir of Redclyffe."

X. Tree of the genus Salix.

XI. Manifest.

XII. Aquatic musteline mammal.

XIII. A farm horse.

XIV. Snares.

XV. Omnipotent.

XVI. An eye wrinkle (comp.).

XVII. Chess man.

XVIII. A dupe (comp.).

XIX. God of Mischief (Norse).

XX. Broadly elliptical.

XXI. Steadfast.

XXII. Bounce a ball.

XXIII. Utmost height.

XXIV. Egyptian epithet of Zeus.

XXV. Bitterness.

XXVI. Marks indicating direction.

XXVII. Swiss mountain singing.

WORDS

165 78 101 71 19 108

44 120 146 113 169 110 106 17 162 27

49 69 3 35

164 73 141 65 6 179 28 145 100

26 178 121 33 91 167

10 16 139 53 177 115 86 171 173

31 135 82 63 159 126 94 18

38 133 168 148 41 81

114 143 132 118 54

62 42 20 72 151 102

64 138 129 48 158

7 55 80 24 152

96 157 59 103 29 125

107 124 134 161 76 170 174 130

40 142 140 84 93 122 66 14

5 99 95 37 160 79 147 154 112

75 32 116 136 166 123

21 56 30 43 1 13 180

89 98 4 137

22 85 2 60

109 117 155 127 144 92 74 172 70 83

9 58 131 39 175 77 111

45 8 23 150 104 36

15 67 87 163 156

12 176 105 97 52 61 46 149

11 47 153 90 50 51

88 68 25 128 57 119 34

The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

zation imposes upon patients; for building slowly and painstakingly an anatomy and physiology of the psyche and for conceding that psychoanalysis has raised at least as many problems as it has solved.

Dr. White is less clear, if he believes that the "no-restraint" and "parole" movements are not frequently overdone to the detriment of the public, patient, and doctor; that now the doctor's deep understanding of mental cases is much different from that of the good mental nurse; that the psychoanalytic and mental hygiene movements have been significant contributions to therapy; that by substituting dynamic mechanisms for Kraepelian classification and tissue-organ studies he is approaching real explanation and practical therapy rather than remaining at a descriptive level. Psychoanalysis has struck a new note in medicine; it is indeed true in Nietzsche's words that "mankind has a poor ear for new music," but sometimes it can be very sour.

F. K.

COSTUME IN THE DRAMA OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. By M. Channing Linthicum. Oxford University Press. 1936. $5.

It is hard to understand how that portion of the public which reads or writes about Elizabethan plays can have got on so long without this admirable book, and it is hard also to conceive how the Elizabethan plays and other evidences of excess energy in that age ever came to be produced by a people who had first to devote such infinite time and imagination to the fundamental business of getting themselves dressed. After reading Miss Linthicum's interesting but rather terrifying details concerning what the well-dressed Elizabethan, male and female, wore, one is likely to feel that even a man in that day must have regarded the penning of a comedy or a batch of sonnets as light labor compared with the strain of inventing and tying or pinning upon himself the vast assortment of objets d'art that made up his daily garb.

Following a custom from which few authors and no publisher will lightly depart, the name of Shakespeare is stressed in the title of the book; and this is here just enough, for Miss Linthicum has thrown a great deal of new and clearer light upon Shakespeare's allusions to dress and fabrics. She has done the same thing for the other dramatists of the time, and subsequent editors of their works, as well as Shakespeare's, will be much in her debt. But her book goes farther than this. She has digested a great quantity of manuscript material, domestic and official, and a large library of social and commercial monographs, and has thus produced a volume, charmingly written and thoroughly documented, which, quite apart from the dramatists she illustrates, can be read with profit as a contribution to the history of the arts of living. No man, and few women, we suppose, will venture to dispute her decisions on technical points. No woman, and few men, will question the interest of her subject.

T. B.

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Science

MORE SIMPLE SCIENCE. By Julian Huxley and E. N. da C. Andrade. Harpers. 1936. $2.50.

"Simple Science," a previous volume on mechanics, physics, chemistry, and biology by the same authors, was a success but did not cover the whole scientific horizon. In the present sequel these authors round out their sweep with a treatment of the sciences of earth and man, throwing in a compact history of science for good measure. (It is probably not possible to gain a penetrative comprehension of the significance of science in our modern world without acquiring some knowledge of its historical background—its roots.)

As their titles imply, these volumes are simple; a youth of twelve to fourteen would have little or no trouble with them. Yet they are not aimed at juveniles, and adults who may have felt a lack of general scientific background, yet hesitated to begin getting one because books offered as elementary seemed pretty formidable, would find this book comparatively plain sailing.

The earth and its climates, earth history, soil and agriculture, the development of life, and artificial improvement of livestock, constitute the scope. Both authors have high standing in the world of science.

A. G. I.

Brief Mention

William Stephen Grooch's *Skyway to Asia* (Longmans, Green: $2.50) is a breezy account of the difficulties and adventures in establishing commercial air bases across the Pacific. * * * The Havelock Ellis fan will want to see his *Questions of Our Day,* a continuation of brief answers to many questions asked him by correspondents (Vanguard: $2.50). * * * From the Oxford University Press there has come a handbook which should be very useful to the scholar in poetry. It is a survey called *The Development of Welsh Poetry,* by H. I. Bell ($2.50), and covers its subject from its obscure beginnings up to contemporary Welsh verse. With it should be noted *The Study of Poetry,* by H. W. Garrod, the distinguished Oxford critic, also published by the Oxford University Press, $1.25. * * * We should also note that the Oxford University Press has taken over the right to publish the novels of Mark Rutherford, and the relatively few but very choice readers who admire this writer, who has never had the reputation which many think he deserves, will be glad to know that *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford,* and *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* the second part of his autobiography (all of which have a following), have been reprinted ($1.25 each). * * * From the Cambridge University Press (Macmillan: $7) comes a valuable and very interesting *Historical Geography of England before 1800.* The book begins with pre-historic South Britain and concludes with the growth of London up to 1800. It is illustrated by numerous graphs and maps and should undoubtedly prove a valuable reference book.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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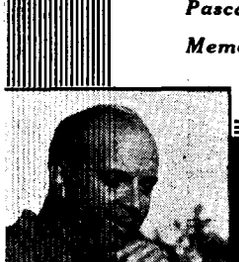

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